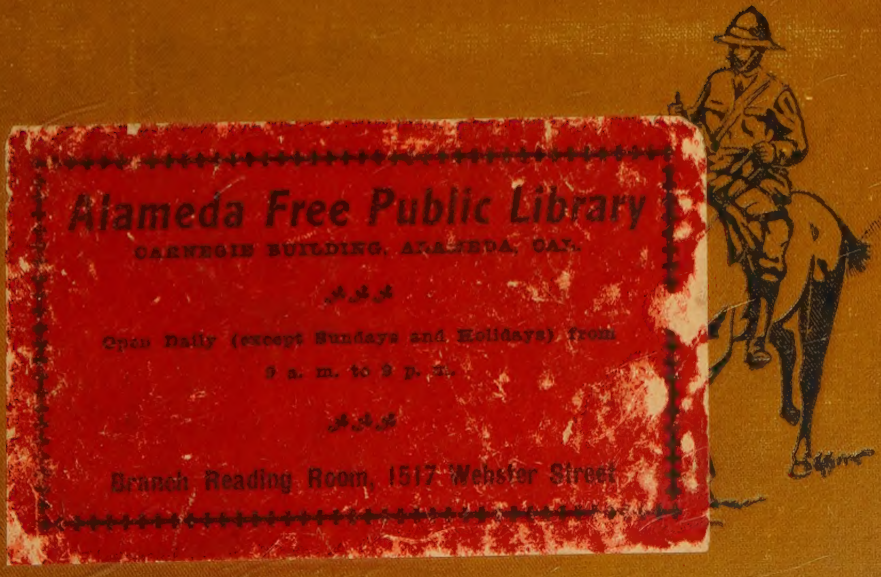
THE CAPTURE OF DE WET

P. J. SAMPSON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THE CAPTURE OF DE WET

From a Painting by Franz D. Oerder.

General Louis Botha, P.C.

By permission of Mr. H. C. Drabbe, Pretoria, owner of the large painting.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD.

THE CAPTURE OF DE WET

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REBELLION 1914

BY

PHILIP J. SAMPSON

LATE EDITOR OF THE "TRANSVAAL CHRONICLE"

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1915

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PREFACE

The South African rebellion occupies an important position in the history of the great European war. It is not important in the matter of the casualties, or in the actual number of men engaged, as such things are reckoned to-day, but it is of surpassing importance from the ethical point of view. The psychology of this rebellion will repay study by those who are endeavouring to analyze that subtle essence known as the German psyche, manifested in that still more imponderable quality termed "Kultur." It is not suggested that in South Africa it has assumed any unusual forms; there is just the same spying and treachery, the ignoring of principles of honour, such as the history of the European war has accustomed us to expect. What it has done that is slightly out of the ordinary is to reveal the mental attitude of certain British subjects. Be it remembered that the whole of the British Empire has been absolutely solid on the side of the Motherland, with the single exception of South Africa. Here only has there been a jarring note; and it affords a fascinating study to those who like to probe beneath the surface, to try and piece together, from the fragments of evidence available, the particular qualities that go to the making of a rebel *in fact*, as distinguished from

those amusing people such as you may find in a certain portion of the British Isles who talk a great deal about rebellion, but lack the courage to take the field. Your true rebel does very little talking.

In the following pages such evidence as it has been possible for the writer to collect will be found with regard to the men and the movement, from which it will be seen that they were prompted to their action by the strangest compound of racialism, superstition, religion, and brain-storm. The implacable racialism of Beyers thrusts itself forward in every line of his remarkable letter to General Smuts, when tendering his resignation. Yet Beyers was an intensely religious man, and he could, and did, find it possible to square his action in going into rebellion with the tenets of Holy Scripture. And in this he was sustained by several ministers of religion, who found it not incompatible with their holy calling to take the field with the rebels and aid them in their desperate enterprise. Beyers, it may be added, was inordinately vain of his personal appearance, and suffered from the complaint to the learned known as megalomania, and to the man in the street by a more expressive term.

De Wet, again, was of a different type. He is religious, but it does not appear that religion dominated his action in this particular affair. In the first place, he was very angry with Botha and Smuts because they had put Hertzog out of the Cabinet. As a Free Stater he strongly resented the predominant influence of the Transvaalers in the Government, particularly as the Government was developing

on lines hateful to the "old school," whose abiding fear always has been that British government in South Africa meant that the ascendancy of the whites over the blacks would cease, and one day the kaffirs would be permitted to be on an equality with the whites. This was one of the rallying-cries of the Boers at the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War; and as De Wet always has treated kaffirs with severity, regarding them as little better than animals, whom he believed he ought to have the right to thrash as he would a dog, it only needed a fine for ill-treating a native to bring on a raging brain-storm that drove him headlong into the maelstrom of rebellion. To fine *him*, De Wet, was the greatest outrage conceivable, and clear proof that the time had come to strike a blow for freedom!

Of Maritz it may be said that he was a compound of enormous strength, inordinate vanity, little education, and the one, perhaps, of all the rebels most open to the influence of German gold. If anyone went into the rebellion for what he could get out of it, that one would be Maritz. His overweening vanity may be judged by the fact that he ceded Walfisch Bay to the Germans, and declared the independence of South Africa.

Fourie was of the Beyers type of mind—a very pleasant man apart from the racial question, and religious, but his hatred of British dominance had grown to a disease; while the fact that he had a permanent limp, due to a bullet wound in the knee received during the Anglo-Boer War, intensified the bitterness to one who had been a fine footballer and

athlete. He also was a friend of Beyers, who had obtained for him his position as Major in the Defence Force, and perhaps felt it his duty to follow his chief.

Muller was rather a colourless man, and it was a surprise to many to find this quiet person, an eminently respectable director of the Government Land Bank at Pretoria, throwing in his lot with the rebels, especially as he was engaged in the task of getting together a Government commando, and had never shown any dangerous symptoms. Perhaps he hoped that a successful rebellion might restore his drooping fortunes ?

Kemp is the born fighter, a typical veldsman whose ability is only second to that of De Wet, the one man who successfully eluded the Government forces after a seven weeks' chase.

These men were the real leaders, and of them it can be said that they did not fight too desperately for their ideals. Even admitting that they were animated by the highest sentiments, what one blames them for is their utter lack of the proper means for carrying their project to a successful conclusion. The only inference that can be drawn is that they relied upon some assistance which failed them at the last moment. Had they known that the total rebel force would be not more than 10,000 men, armed only with rifles, and not very much ammunition, it is safe to say that the leaders—by no means fools—never would have started upon such a desperate enterprise. One feels that it must have been Maritz who failed to keep to the time-table with the big German guns and quick-firers, for which the rebels

waited in vain. The pompous Maritz, who was to "hack through" with his big force of rebels and Germans, did not make allowance for the fact that he might be defeated at the very outset, and himself wounded, causing him to keep out of the limelight for two months. By that time the rebellion was over. There is no doubt that the man who shot Maritz in the knee saved the loyalists many complications. This was not the only fortuitous shot fired in connection with the rebellion.

It is to be noted that, while our German friends were willing enough to help stir up rebellion in the Union, and provide the necessary arms and ammunition to carry it on, they were too careful of their own skins to make any real attempt to go to the assistance of the rebels. It is characteristic of German methods that they are careful to see that their victims are left to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. It may be that they were badly informed as to the real position, for Maritz certainly was under the impression, as late as the middle of November, that 70,000 rebels were "up," and he was sitting down near the frontier waiting for De Wet to join him with 10,000 men from the Free State alone. Perhaps that 70,000 might have materialized if it had not been for one or two unforeseen incidents.

One is bound to say that all the luck was on the side of the loyalists; the rebellion movement never seemed to be in good favour with Providence from the very start, and when General Botha took the field, Providence forsook the rebels altogether. It is unnecessary to say much with regard to the "Fight-

ing Premier." The term most accurately describes him. He is the ideal fighter—strong, resolute, good-tempered, quick of decision, never flurried—a man who inspires confidence. Those who only have seen him in Parliament, sitting white and worried under the attacks from the opposite side of the House, twisting nervously in his seat as the shafts of satire or anger pierced him, would never recognize this big bronzed man, so sure of himself. Always fond of a chat and a joke, living on the plainest food (prepared for him by his orderly, who was with him during the Boer War twelve years previously), able to ride enormous distances on horseback without fatigue, he is a real soldiers' general. No wonder his burghers speak of him affectionately as "Oom Louis."

And of that other figure "behind the throne," whom few see, but all feel—General Smuts? Carrying three, and sometimes four, portfolios at once; planning, organizing; always at his desk, from which he cannot be dragged into publicity unless the occasion is of outstanding importance, he does the work of three or four men without noise or fuss. He is the efficient man. He lives plainly, sleeps lightly and little, and reminds one of nothing so much as a highly polished, highly efficient shuttle, ceaselessly engaged—as the underthread—in making the most efficient Government garments of all shapes, sizes, and patterns. In appearance wiry and alert; the short, pointed, golden beard covering a most deceptive mouth and chin; most charmingly polite, suave, and conciliatory; and when he is about to be par-

ticularly dangerous, disarming all suspicion with a gentle and deprecatory motion of the hands, as though "washing them with invisible soap in imperceptible water"— this man, working twelve hours a day at the South African "War Office," is Kitchener, Asquith, Lloyd-George in one. No, the rebels had no luck.

With these brief thumb-nail sketches of the principal *dramatis personæ*, the reader will be able to follow with some interest their career during a few short, whirling, anxious months towards the close of the eventful year 1914, when men in South Africa, as in the Homeland, were being put to the supreme test.

Things never can be quite the same again with Briton and Boer. It was putting the Dutchman to a severe test—to the hardest that any man can be subjected to—to shoot down his own people in defence of the flag he himself was warring against only a few years previously. Come to think of it, now, it is rather a wonderful thing that has happened. Probably unique in the history of the world. The psychology of the men who stood the test and came out true as steel is worth study in detail and in mass. Why did they remain true when others did not? Possibly an answer in part, if not in whole, may be found as the following pages are turned. "The path of duty and honour," says General Botha. A noble phrase.

Every effort has been made by the writer to prepare a straightforward narrative, so as to make it of general interest, as well as compiling a volume

which will have permanent value as a record of a most important event in the history of South Africa and the British Empire—perhaps not the least important chapter in the great German plot to rule the world. If sometimes the presentation of the facts may appear a trifle dull, the indulgence of the reader is claimed. It is not always possible to make history as thrilling as a romance; and while there are many thrilling incidents to record, a little of the duller matter must of necessity be incorporated here and there, in order to complete all the links in the chain.

The writer was on the spot throughout the whole trouble: saw the gradual rising of the coiled snake, was in a position to know much that was going on behind the scenes before matters came to a head, and, as for the actual incidents themselves, has been fortunate in securing narratives from actual participators in most of the dramatic incidents described.

P. J. S.

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THE CAPTURE OF DE WET

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The seeds of the rebellion—Dormant since the war—The Hertzog split—Effects of the strike—Beyers' visits to Europe—Patronized by the Kaiser—Arming the burghers—For what purpose?

It is not easy to say just where the rebellion started. It probably had its origin in the Great Trek, as far back as 1836, in that ineradicable instinct of the Dutchman for freedom, for more space, for elbow-room, for the solitary life for himself personally and his family—seeing no man's roof-tree but his own; and for the solitary life as a nation—seeing no country's flag but his own. That same spirit has persisted all these years. It led up to the subjugation of the Zulus, to the taming of the wilderness. It was responsible for Majuba, for the Boer War of 1899. At any time since the Peace of Vereeniging one could find it cropping up in almost unexpected places. The spirit of rebellion—*i.e.*, freedom—has been lying dormant in the hearts of a considerable section of the South African Dutch people for thirteen years.

The smouldering embers often were fanned into flame by fervid patriots, such as, for instance, Hertzog,

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who, before and after the consummation of union of the four Provinces, endeavoured to force upon the people of the Orange Free State an education policy which could have no other object than to lead not to union, but to separation.

In fact, it was not until Hertzog's anti-British policy and inflammatory utterances had reached a point unbearable alike to the Premier and the majority of the members of the Cabinet, as well as the British section of the community, that he was practically expelled from the Cabinet.

Here, it is safe to say, we can discover the immediate cause of the rebellion of 1914. From that time onwards there has been an obvious split in the ranks of the South African Dutch. The irreconcilables, most of the old bitter-enders, rallied round Hertzog, not only in the Free State, where he had a particularly large following, but in the Transvaal, where, especially in the Western and Northern districts—and even in the capital city of Pretoria itself—much of the old spirit remained.

In endeavouring to ascertain the root causes of the upheaval in the Dutch party, which, as already stated, was the precursor of the rebellion, other considerations obtrude themselves. One was the personal jealousy that existed between Hertzog and certainly two other members of the Cabinet, the gravamen of whose offence was that they were friendly to the British in their sentiments, and avowedly imbued with a desire honestly to carry out a policy of conciliation. The irreconcilables regarded this as weakness and cutting at the roots of South African

nationalism, which they were determined should be built up on exclusively Dutch lines. General Botha and General Smuts, on the other hand, were equally determined that there should be equal rights, and that the new nation should develop along the two broad lines of national languages and ideals, with the hope that in the course of time the two streams would merge.

There is no question that the policy of General Botha and General Smuts gave offence to a considerable section of the backveld, who looked upon Hertzog as the strong man, and Botha as the opposite. We shall never know just how much of Hertzog's virulent crusade against General Botha was permeated by the money question. Hertzog is not a rich man, and the loss of the comfortable salary of £2,500 per annum must have been a considerable blow. It would be ludicrous to assert that the sudden cessation of income had no effect upon the political campaign he subsequently undertook, or upon the virulence of his attacks upon his former colleagues.

This question of office and salary, sordid as it may appear, cannot be left out of account. Even patriotism cannot live by bread alone, and while mercenary motives may not have been the impelling force that drove Hertzog along the narrow path of bitter hostility to the Botha Government, it certainly was not altogether removed from the thoughts of many of those who threw in their lot with him. The Dutchman is democratic to the core, thinks that "Jack is as good as his master," if not a trifle better, and (some of him) has no diffidence in mentally view-

ing himself in a position somewhat removed from the pedestal upon which he would be placed by a disinterested observer. There was more than one Dutchman who linked himself up to the Hertzog party in the hope that, with a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together (not without a helping hand from the Labour party), they might be able to push the Botha party out, and themselves taste the sweets of office. There was a good deal of patriotism about the backveld burgher, but there was a considerable dash of pelf about the townsman.

The definite split in the ranks of the South African party during the Parliamentary session of 1914 soon caused the low rumblings of the backveld to develop into more definite thunder. Curiously enough, some of these mutterings were due to the operations of the very party the Hertzogites relied upon to upset the Botha Cabinet. This was the Labour party, which, owing to the strike riots, shootings, and deportations without trial, was in a state of white-hot hostility against the Government, and would have stopped at nothing save violence (and perhaps not even that if they had been armed) to turn the Botha Government out. Public opinion was so much on their side that Labour actually secured the utterly unexpected majority of one in the Transvaal Provincial Council. They promptly proceeded to use that majority in vigorous fashion, lashing into blind paroxysms of rage the conservative Dutch element, to whom anything like advanced legislation—when it has to be paid for—is anathema.

Echoes of the doings of the Labour party in the

Provincial Council filtered into the country districts, but always cleverly put to the not very well-informed country people, as due to the "verdomde British"—of course studiously ignoring the fact that a vast number of Dutch workers had voted to put the Labour party into power. To the people away back it was represented that the British had obtained possession of the Government, were going to tax the land or take their farms away from them, and they must be ready to "upsaddle."

Those who lived in Pretoria during that period will know how often the town was invaded by bearded farmers, who held earnest and secret talks. They had their "indabas" at private houses, but they frequently took their coffee at well-known coffee-houses in and near Church Street—and Beyers oft-times was in their company.

Beyers' attitude towards the British never had been in doubt. To everybody in the Transvaal he had been known ever since the Boer War as an implacable enemy, with a particularly venomous tongue. Did not General Botha and the first Transvaal Parliament make him Speaker of the House in order to keep his venom under control? And, by the same token, upon the establishment of the Union, when the Speakership of the Union House of Assembly went to Sir James Molteno, by right of seniority, General Beyers was again carefully given a post which it was thought would effectually gag him against political harangues. To make assurance doubly sure, they gave him a gorgeous uniform, made him (a solicitor) Commandant-General of the Union

a direct incentive to a rising at some future date, especially with a man of Beyers' known sentiments as chief of the army. He never had made any secret of his opinions, and at the time of the strike his manner of speaking had a touch of acerbity about it that, to careful observers, carried the elements of danger. For instance, it was hardly the acme of wisdom or conciliation to tell the British workers that, if they did not like the conditions, there were plenty of ships at the ports, and they could get out of the country! This and other statements, added to the gift of the rifles, brought Beyers under suspicion, and from that time onwards it was freely predicted that there would be trouble at the first opportunity, especially as the British element was practically unarmed.

This, then, is the man whom from February onwards we find visiting all parts of South Africa, inspecting the various units of the Defence Force, conferring with the various Commandants and Field Cornets. One wonders how much poisonous interpretation upon current political events (the aims and objects of the Labour party in the Provincial Council, for instance) can be attributed to his tongue? This much is certain: that more than one of the men who came into Pretoria for these mysterious meetings with Beyers and others made no secret of their intention to "upsaddle" before long.

Pressed for definite information, two replies might be ascertained. The Labourite would be told that his period of rejoicing at being in power in the Provincial Council would soon be at an end, as the

burghers meant to wipe him out of existence; they were not going to be ruled by British, with their hateful land taxes and the upsetting of the old order of things. Others blamed Botha and Smuts, and said if they were strong men and were regardful of their duty to "Land en Volk" (land and people), they would end it, and put a stop to these dangerous, new-fangled, Socialist ideas. It was quite true that Botha had said that "he would not allow Socialism in the country," but he had done nothing to stop it except put down the strike by force. That certainly was the way to treat these "foreign adventurers," as the good patriot Hertzog properly called them, but clearly Botha and Smuts were not firm enough with them, otherwise there would be more prosperity in the country, and "our people" would not have to work on the roads as labourers doing kaffir's work at 3s. 4d. a day!

There were half a dozen reasons fermenting in the minds of the discontented section of the rank and file, any and all of which were used by astute leaders to keep up a feeling of resentment against the Government and the position of affairs generally. The only definite grievance that can be traced is the personal one—that Hertzog had been turned out of the Cabinet, and Botha would not reinstate him, nor resign.

Matters were in this nebulous stage when the clouds began to drift across the European horizon. General Botha had gone to Rhodesia to get a brief respite from the frightful strain he had gone through in connection with the industrial upheaval and the sub-

sequent session of Parliament, where passions had been unloosed, and the Premier and the Government had received much punishment at the hands of the Labourites and Hertzogites, not to speak of such candid friends as John X. Merriman—he of the biting phrase and caustic tongue. In fact, the Government had been riddled, had gone down considerably in the estimation of the public, and there was a vague feeling that they had lost the confidence of the country, and were hanging on to office merely for the sake of the loaves and fishes. So General Botha went off to Rhodesia to rest and gather strength for a great campaign throughout such parts of the Union as seemed to have been undermined by the Hertzog influence. Apparently there was nothing more in the situation than the promise of a particularly piquant political fight, with the prospect of Labour capturing all the towns, as a result of the Government's methods of handling the strike, and the Hertzogites swamping the country (or a considerable part of it) through reasons mainly personal, partly racial, and backed up by that vast body of inarticulate discontent found in every country, and known generally as "ag'in the Government."

CHAPTER II

Outbreak of the European War—Effect upon Dutch opinion—The Government challenged—Curious Lichtenburg story—Delarey and the prophet Van Rensburg—Visions of the bulls—Suggestions of sedition—First official statement—Imperial troops leave—Defence force called up—Germans cross frontier—Expeditionary force rumours—Division of opinion—Hertzog Party congress—Pretoria seething with sedition—Beyers and the troops—"Boer and Briton will stand together"—Pro-Germans at work.

Upon the declaration of war on August 3, General Botha cut short his tour, hurriedly returned from Rhodesia, and immediately announced his intention of postponing indefinitely his proposed anti-Hertzog tour in the Free State.

The hurried departure of Imperial troops from Potchefstroom and Pretoria to Capetown, *en route* to Europe, the panic-stricken shutting down of the De Beers, Premier, and other diamond mines, were startling in their suddenness, but appeared to the public as perhaps exaggerated evidences of the probable effect of the crisis in Europe. There can be little doubt, however, that such incidents had their weight in influencing the minds of a certain section of the community. The departure of the Imperial troops certainly was a prime factor, and one frequently heard the remark in Pretoria: "If the Boers ever intend to rise, now is their chance."

For a week or ten days after the outbreak of war the attitude of the Government itself gave rise to considerable misgiving among the Loyalists, for not a word would they utter indicating whether they intended to support the Imperial Government or not. To be quite frank, there was considerable alarm felt both in Pretoria and in Johannesburg that they did not mean to "play the game." This feeling was intensified by the publication of cables from England announcing the receipt by the British Government of loyal messages of support from all the other Dominions and Dependencies. The absence of any such message from South Africa caused much disquietude, and not a little chortling among the pro-Germans. The Pretoria morning paper put the British misgivings into plain words, and asked the Government to declare its position with relation to the crisis.

The citizens of Pretoria endeavoured to give the Government a lead by holding a huge mass meeting on the Church Square. Dean Gordon and the Mayor (Mr. Andrew Johnston) voiced the feelings of the Loyalists in no uncertain terms, and the huge meeting assured the Government of their unswerving support and loyalty. There was no opposition of any kind, and the people of Pretoria appeared to be unanimous.

This was all very correct and proper, and gave the loyal section an opportunity of expressing their feelings, in case there might be a few in the capital who doubted the strength of the loyal sentiments there. There is not the slightest doubt that the silence on the part of the Government helped to spread un-

easiness among the Loyalists, and to encourage the disaffected. The presence in the town of hundreds of Germans and others who made no secret of their sympathies and hopes; the burning down of the mobilization stores at the Imperial military stores at Roberts Heights, following upon the burning down of the mobilization stores at Potchefstroom; and the covert looks and hints among those whose loyalty always had been a doubtful quantity, caused a tense feeling steadily to arise.

Just about this time strange stories began to filter into Pretoria concerning unrest in the Lichtenburg district, not far from Pretoria, to the West; but a peremptory order from the omnipotent Press Censor kept the public in complete ignorance of a most remarkable movement then in progress. The facts can be told now. The day before war was declared, Commandant F. G. A. Wolmarans, of that district, went round among the burghers preaching sedition, told the burghers they would soon be hoisting the Vierkleur (the old Transvaal Republican flag), and then they were going to march to the German border to get ammunition. The day after, when Britain declared war, there was tremendous excitement in the Lichtenburg district, caused not so much by the statements of Wolmarans, as by the calling to remembrance of the prophecies of Van Rensburg. Who was Van Rensburg? Well, he was a great friend of General Delarey, with whom he served during the Anglo-Boer War, attaining considerable fame as a prophet by his alleged divinations concerning the whereabouts of the British troops, with the result

that he more than once enabled Delarey to come upon the British unexpectedly, or avoid carefully laid traps for his capture. He had such a hold over the credulous burghers, that if "Oom Niklaas" told them there were or were not any British in the neighbourhood, they implicitly believed him, without troubling to look for themselves! They were not to know that the prophet's reputation was chiefly due, not to the gift of the Spirit, but to the fact that he had at his command a very efficient service of native spies. However, from that time till to-day Van Rensburg had lived up to his reputation, more especially as he had foretold, by means of a mystic vision, the conclusion of that war and the signing of peace.

This ancient gentleman, in fact, suffers from a form of cerebral excitement known as "seeing visions"; and in a country where witchcraft still is a potent force, it is not surprising that he had a large following, not omitting Delarey. In fact, they were the closest of friends, and while Delarey admired the wonderful gifts of the prophet, the prophet was never tired of prophesying great things of his old friend Delarey. Van Rensburg was a great dreamer, and not only were his visions passed on from mouth to mouth, but the old man had put down hundreds in a great book, for remembrance. There was one that was well known among the Dutch in his neighbourhood, and it was to the effect that he had seen the number "15" on a dark cloud, from which blood issued, and then Delarey returning without his hat. Immediately afterwards came a carriage covered

with flowers. The prophet could not interpret the dream, but opined that it meant something very high and splendid for Delarey.

Then there was another of his old dreams, of many years previously, which the excited burghers now recalled, concerning the bulls. The vision was to the effect that Van Rensburg saw seven bulls engaged in furious conflict. There was a red bull, a blue bull, a black bull, a grey bull, and bulls of other tints representing the various nations of Europe. How the prophet knew them by their colours, no one but himself knows, but he satisfied himself that the grey fellow was Germany, that the red bull was Britain, and the black bull France. And, behold, they had terrific fights, and after much gore the black bull went under, also the red bull, and all the other bulls, save the grey bull.

The interpretation of such a simple dream was obvious. Germany was some day to prevail over France and Britain and Russia and all the countries of the earth! Putting this with the mysterious dream of Delarey and the fateful "15," it was quite clear that *the day* had now come whereof their fathers had told them. Did the intelligent people of the Lichtenburg swallow this "cock-and-bull" story? Only too willingly, and when Commandant Wolmarans and Field Cornet I. E. Classen announced that a meeting would be held at Truerfontein on August 15, they no longer had any doubts, and joyfully prepared for the great day.

Van Rensburg, having done so well, dreamed some more. He dreamed that it was "all up" with the

Union Government and with General Botha and General Smuts; both would run away, for he had in a vision seen the English leave the Transvaal and trek to Natal, and when they had gone far away a vulture left them and flew back to the Transvaal. That was Botha! As for Smuts, he would rush away to England to his friends the British, and he would never come to South Africa again. The man who would be at the head of affairs would be one who "represented the Godhead" (a God-fearing man). There would be no bloodshed; all would be done peaceably and in good order, for the time of the prophecy was come to pass when they would see the "sifting" of the British and the Dutch—the British on the one side and the Dutch on the other; the Union Jack pulled down, and the old Vierkleur restored to its place; and Delarey was to be one of the Lord's instruments of deliverance from Botha, Smuts, and the British.

For a week the secret excitement was intense in the way-back farms of the Lichtenburg and Rustenburg districts, with German secret agents going about among the burghers, stirring them up with specious promises and flagrant lies. Van Rensburg was dreaming dreams at high pressure, and working overtime at the business; while dear old Delarey was apparently walking about as though a Sunday-school treat was in progress, and he was to be the one to say grace. In view of the fact that the burghers were being instructed to "upsaddle," with rifle, blankets, all the ammunition they possessed, and food for at least ten days, it promised to be a picnic on

quite a large scale. When the gleeful burghers asked where they were going after the meeting, they were told (according to the sworn testimony of one) that they would first move on to Johannesburg under Delarey, and resistance might be expected before they were able to take the place. Others were told that they would proceed direct to Potchefstroom, to join up with the commandoes of that district and proclaim a Republic.

A pretty plan if it could have been carried out, but the Government got to hear of it—as Governments do get to hear of these secret movements—and a peremptory message was sent to Delarey to present himself at Pretoria and give an account of the secret doings in his district. Now, Delarey is, or rather was, a Botha man, and when he arrived in Pretoria it is not too much to say that "Oom Louis" gave him a severe talking-to. The writer saw Delarey later in the day, and was struck by his woebegone appearance. He looked like a man who had had a very bad time and was exceedingly sick of himself—for this was on the 11th, and the great day was set down for to-morrow. That great to-morrow came, but when Delarey went out he was accompanied by the great little "Sammy" Marks, the richest and tightest financier in South Africa. What arguments "Oom Louis" and "Sammy" Marks used between them there is nothing on record to show, save the fact that the 800 burghers then and there assembled heard no fiery speech, no talk about independence, or marching on Johannesburg or Potchefstroom, but it was very much like a Sunday-school oration after

all. They were to go home and be good boys. If the Government wanted them in connection with the events in Europe, they would be called up in the usual way. The burghers did not know what to make of it at all; they listened in stony silence, and when Delarey moved a resolution of confidence in the Government, they voted for it without emotion. But they grumbled and swore loudly enough on their way home at being made fools of in this way.

Thus ends phase number one of the rebellion; conceived in secret, it died stillborn.

It was during this Lichtenburg incident (on August 12) that the Government issued its first statement concerning the war and its attitude therein. It did not convey all the information that the Loyalists wanted—as to that it was delightfully vague—but at any rate it conveyed the hint that South Africa would soon be asked to do something. As being the first statement of the Union Government after the outbreak of war, the document is worth preserving. It is as follows:

"At the suggestion of the Union Government after the outbreak of war, His Majesty's Government decided to remove the Imperial troops at present in South Africa, and the Union Government at once undertook the responsibility of safeguarding the defence of the Union in every possible way. In order to carry this undertaking into effect, it now becomes necessary for the Union to organize and equip an adequate force for the purpose of taking the place of the Imperial troops, and preparing for any contingencies that may occur. For this purpose the Government propose not only to rely upon the

Union Defence Force proper, but to afford an opportunity of other suitable citizens not at present belonging to the Defence Force, who so desire, to volunteer for active service in South Africa during the continuance of the present war. Notice in regard to this important matter will be issued from the Defence Department in due course, and the Government have no doubt as to the response which will be given. At the proper time Parliament will be called together to consider the action of the Government, and to make provision for the necessary extra expenditure. In the meantime, the Government are taking every precaution to ensure, as far as possible, the continuance of normal conditions within the Union, and to deal with the numerous special problems which are arising. They feel assured of the active support of the people of South Africa, of whatever race or political complexion, and hope that the result will be the safeguarding of the abiding interests of our common country."

Events followed each other in rapid succession. On August 19 the 12th (Pretoria) Regiment was called up immediately for continuous training, and almost simultaneously the regiments of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand went into the camp of training at Booysens, near Johannesburg. On the 22nd what may be described as the " town " units in all parts of the Union were called out. The only significance to be drawn from this fact is that there was every necessity for making these men efficient in their drill as soldiers—particularly the infantry—whereas the burgher (mounted) regiments are natural cavalry, and are better if left to fight according to their own methods. Naturally enough, people asked

each other the reason for all these martial preparations. The answer was provided by the publication of the news that on August 21 a German force had crossed the frontier from German South-West Africa at Nakob, and had proceeded to entrench themselves; while on the 24th Boer farmers had been attacked at Schuit Drift on the Orange River, and had been forced to take refuge on one of the islands in the river.

On the same day (24th) the Government issued a proclamation, announcing its intention to call out the National reserves in certain districts. From this date can be traced a marked change of tone throughout the country. There was one section, including the British to a man, that openly rejoiced at the prospect of "having a go" at the Germans in "German South-West," and they promptly adopted a suspicious, and in many cases a hostile, attitude towards all Germans and German sympathizers. There was another and much smaller section which, while professing loyalty to the State and the Flag, deprecated an attack upon our "peaceful" neighbours. This division of opinion was not very patent in Johannesburg, where the intense loyalty of the population is a thing to wonder at and admire, considering its cosmopolitan character, but it could be felt in places like Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom, and Pretoria. Pretoria, especially, was saturated with it, and the streets and coffee-houses grew more crowded than ever with visitors from the country—stern-faced men whose solemn faces presaged no light-hearted acceptance of the Government's call for all the able-bodied men. All sorts of rumours were flying about, and in this

instance rumour did not lie, for there can be no doubt that the crisis was cleaving through the ranks of the Dutch like fire through the veld. There were serious gatherings going on day and night, deputations to the Government, remonstrances, threats even of refusal to serve if any attacks were made upon the Germans beyond the Union frontier. This seemed to be the attitude of those who afterwards came to be known as Beyers' men. It was also that of the Hertzogites, who, with daring cunning, convened a congress of the party in Pretoria at this critical stage.

They deplored the division in their party, for which they blamed General Botha and General Smuts (!); affirmed the necessity of governing the country on religious lines; deplored the way religion was being taught in the schools; but made it very clear that "they would not take part in any invasion for robbery," to quote the words of the Chairman, Senator A. D. W. Wolmarans. General Delarey attended "as a member of the Botha party," and pleaded for unity in this time of crisis.

A significant feature of the carefully planned congress was the exhibition outside the hall where the meetings were held of a wretched daub of a painting representing the burning of a Boer farm-house, which was flying the white flag. Englishmen promptly complained to the police of such a deliberately provocative exhibition, and the "artist" (a Pretoria sign-painter) was arrested, and subsequently charged with inciting to disaffection.

By this time feeling was running high. The split

had extended to private and social life; a strong anti-British feeling was rising, and it needed no political chemist, with test-tube or microscope, to analyze the situation as it existed in the storm-centre of Pretoria during those critical fermenting days when the British were retreating from Mons to Paris. The situation was accurately diagnosed by the editor of a Pretoria (English) newspaper on August 28, when the following leading article appeared:

"Sedition Rumours.

"We should not be doing our duty to ourselves and our readers if we refrained from commenting upon the amazing situation that has developed in the Union, and particularly in this district, during the past three weeks. Up to August 4 our Dutch-speaking fellow-British subjects, without exception, would have been prepared to express their loyalty to the British flag; but since the date above-mentioned, when Britain declared war against Germany, a very considerable change has come over the community. We are bound to say, and we say it frankly, that that former feeling of loyalty does not exist to-day; that there is among our Dutch compatriots a very dangerous spirit of unrest and disaffection, and that among some of the 'older hands,' whose lip-service in the past has been such a marked feature of their public conduct, there have been statements made that, to say the least, could scarcely be regarded as in the best of taste. To crown it all, there has been a congress of certain members of the Hertzog party, who have taken advantage of the present crisis to come together and emphasize their miserable little differences, and to show their marvellous nationalism,

by talking a lot of pestilent nonsense that was as near poisonous sedition as anything we can imagine. If we add to these things the fact that the Dutch-speaking men are not as a whole responding to the call to rejoin the colours, and that there is in this town a particularly unpleasant feeling of hostility towards the British, and an open delight expressed at anything that savours of a check or a reverse to British arms, it needs no further words from us to establish the point that the place is seething with sedition. We believe that the authorities have a watchful eye and ear open, and that a batch of arrests may be expected within a few hours. Some of the people with loose tongues do not appear to realize that a state of war exists, and that every man who is not 'British' to-day is an enemy, and must be treated as such. There is too much loose talk going on in and around Pretoria at the present moment to be either pleasant or desirable, and it is high time it was stopped."

This diagnosis was too accurate in the sense that it roused the wrath of the Censor, and the newspaper was promptly called to account, not because it was inaccurate, but because it was impolitic. It certainly might have been impolitic from the point of view of the higher strategy, but from the lowly standpoint of the man in the street it was so true that there probably were more black eyes, scarred faces, and disreputable noses in Pretoria during that period than at any time either before or since.

What was Beyers doing in these critical days? Presumably he was doing his duty as Commandant-General, and getting the Citizen Army into working condition. His subordinates certainly were working

splendidly in this direction. So far as one can see, however, General Beyers' heart was not in the business. He kept away from the Booysens training-camp till his absence caused comment, and he permitted regiments to depart without inspecting them. However, he went to Booysens at last (on Saturday, August 29), and, in the light of after-events, the conclusion of his speech to the troops is not without interest. After complimenting them upon their work, and expressing regret for his inability to visit them before, he said:

"I hope, as we have got affairs into shape now, to enjoy the privilege of seeing the troops of the Booysens Brigade more often. I shall take the opportunity of visiting you before you go away, and I am confident that both officers and men will do their very utmost to uphold the high reputation of South Africans as a fighting race. I feel certain that you are going to do your best. I wish to remark again, as I have often done at various places throughout the Union from the commencement of my appointment as Commandant-General, that whenever our country is threatened, Boer and Briton will stand together and fight to the last man. (Loud cheers.)

"I do not think it is necessary for me to keep you any longer, but I only wish to express my gratification at what I have seen this morning in the inspection of your work. I am satisfied with the progress you have made, though there is room for more improvement, and I hope you will have time to progress before you go on active service, and as far as organization, drill, and other points are concerned, you will be in perfect condition and form. I am glad of this opportunity to address you, and I am

convinced every man will do his utmost to qualify himself in those duties which we expect him to carry out, perhaps under very trying circumstances; but let him all the more be patient, loyal, and persevering to the very end. Remove your headgear! Three cheers for His Majesty the King!"

Nothing of outstanding importance happened for a week. On September 7 the 12th (Pretoria) Regiment left Booysens camp for the south for an unknown destination, it being freely rumoured, however, that they were destined for German South-West. This rumour was sufficient to raise another storm among another section of the community, who fulminated against the Government (in private) for sending these young and helpless lads away, probably to be killed in a cruel war of aggression; and so on and so forth. The young and helpless were, as a matter of fact, as merry as grigs, and delighted at the opportunity of having a scrap with the Germans; but that, of course, was beside the mark, when politicians wished to make capital, and friends of Germany were working by fair means and foul to prevent any attack upon German South-West, despite the fact that the enemy had already crossed our frontier.

It is now beyond question that by this time a considerable section of the people had made up their minds to resist service if called upon to act outside the Union, and had indeed determined to raise the standard of revolt to prevent such a project being undertaken. This determination was brought to the notice of the writer, as a fixed and irrevocable decision, as far back as September 8—the day before the

opening of the special session of Parliament at Capetown.

It has since been clearly proved that at this time Maritz was working up a traitor's plot on the frontier, and that an emissary from him, one Captain P. J. Joubert, had arrived from the frontier, bringing certain secret messages for Beyers and others.

CHAPTER III

Special session of Parliament—General Botha's great speech —On honour and dishonour—Hertzog's extraordinary attitude — General Smuts' smashing reply — Result of the voting.

The scene next shifts to Capetown, where the special session of Parliament opened on September 9. It was memorable from the fact that it was a special war session, that it marked the first public appearance in South Africa of Lord Buxton (who had succeeded Lord Gladstone as Governor-General), and that the Premier, General Botha, made a speech which, considering all the circumstances of the case, is as remarkable as anything the war has produced in the shape of support to the British cause. Consider, twelve years previously this same General Botha was in arms against the British, and now the duty and the responsibility were cast upon him of declaring the readiness of himself and his compatriots to take up arms on behalf of their former foes. General Botha knew better than most that such an attitude on the part of the Government would not be received with enthusiasm by a section of the South African Dutch, and he also must have been aware that it would meet with active opposition in certain quarters. Yet he never flinched from the path he and his colleagues in the Cabinet evidently had mapped out for them-

selves from the first. His speech is such a manly epitome of the sentiments of the loyal section of his followers, and had such momentous consequences in bringing the Dutch to the crucial parting of the ways, that it must be given in full:

" As Prime Minister, he moved: ' This House, duly recognizing the obligation of the Union as a portion of the British Empire, respectfully requests His Excellency the Governor-General to convey a humble address to His Majesty the King, assuring him of its loyal support in bringing to a successful issue the momentous conflict which has been forced upon him in defence of the principle of liberty and international honour, and of its whole-hearted determination to take all measures necessary for defending the interests of the Union, and for co-operating with His Majesty's Imperial Government to maintain the security and integrity of the Empire; and further humbly requesting His Majesty to convey to His Majesty the King of the Belgians its admiration and its sincere sympathy with the Belgian people in their heroic stand for the protection of their country against the unprincipled invasion of its rights.'

" The Prime Minister said that never before had the Parliament of South Africa been called upon at a more critical time. The Empire of which we formed a component part was involved in the greatest and most cruel war which humanity had ever had the misfortune to behold. They in South Africa were, so to speak, at the extreme side of this terrible storm. Of course, we suffered certain consequences from the storm, and privation and misery must be suffered in South Africa as the result thereof; but, practically speaking, that storm was still far away from us. There were many people in this country who did not recognize the tremendous seriousness and the great

possibilities of this war, and there were even some people who thought that the storm did not threaten us. This was a most narrow-minded conception. It was a wrong conception, which, he hoped, would be removed, unless they wished to create for themselves an unhappy future. They to-day formed part of the British Empire; they were an ally of the British Empire; and that Empire being involved in war, South Africa was, *ipso facto*, also involved in war with the common enemy. (Hear, hear.) That position seemed so clear to him that it could not be contradicted, so he would not say much on it. There were only two possibilities. The one possibility was one of faith, duty, and honour. (Applause.) The other was of dishonour and disloyalty. He knew the South African people. There was not a quality in these South African people more characteristic than a sense of honour. The history of their people was beautiful and unstained. (Hear, hear.) It would be the desire of their people to maintain that reputation unstained and unblemished. It would be a scandalous dishonour on their part in this time of trouble and misery to throw their loyalty from them. (Hear, hear.) Such disloyalty would make every fair-minded man ashamed. It would be an action which would make them black in the eyes of every other nation. The South African people had perhaps made the greatest sacrifices any people could possibly make. He did not think any people in the world could have made greater sacrifices than the people of South Africa had. (Hear, hear.) But if they had made sacrifices, they had retained their honour and reputation. Theirs was a people who had always looked forward to a future of greatness, but their people had always based their ideals on Christianity. That was the road of a Christian nation. Never had they endeavoured even in the darkest days of their

existence to create anything by treason, and therefore the road of treason was an unknown road among the Dutch and English-speaking people of this country. Therefore he said emphatically that the people of South Africa would not stoop to anything in the way of disloyalty or dishonour. Their duty and conscience told them to be faithful and true to the Imperial Government in every respect in this hour of darkness and trouble.

"That was an attitude which he and his colleagues had determined to adopt, and they did not hesitate to think that the people of this country were in thorough accord with it. He was pleased to see that in every part of South Africa resolutions had been passed expressing loyalty to, and confidence in, the Government. Animated by that spirit, the Government had not hesitated, as soon as it became clear that the position was serious, to cable to the Imperial Government that, if the Imperial troops stationed in South Africa could be of service to the Imperial Government elsewhere, they in South Africa would be prepared to take the defence of South Africa on their own shoulders. (Hear, hear.) The Imperial Government, with thanks, accepted that assurance. This brought with it the necessity for calling up a part of the Defence Force. Not only so, but the Minister of Defence, as soon as war was declared, and after consultation with the Cabinet, at once notified the Defence Force to be ready. It could not be otherwise. People knew that the Defence Force had been called up. These men had not been called upon for the purpose of being sent to other parts of the country, but were notified so that the country could be placed in a proper state of defence.

"The Imperial troops which were stationed here were either gone or were on the way towards leaving, and consequently they had to be prepared to accept

the defence of South Africa. The Imperial Government informed us that war operations in German West Africa were considered to be of strategic importance, and that if the Union could undertake these, it would be regarded as a great service to the Imperial Government. That was, therefore, a request of the British Government to the Union Government. The Government, after having gone carefully into the matter, decided to comply with this request, in the interests of South Africa as well as of the Empire. (Cheers.) 'Now, Mr. Speaker, as I have said, this is a request made to us, and, to my mind, there could be only one reply without creating a position of a much more serious nature than the one we are faced with.' (Cheers.) The mode of operations was a question which could not be discussed in the House. But the House could not be held responsible for them. They must trust the men who were responsible. After the request of the Imperial Government and the decision of the Union Government, the special session was called, and now they must mobilize, and it was only fair that the representatives of the people should know exactly what had happened. It was with that purpose he had risen, so that the House could understand the seriousness of the position, and accept the responsibility they would be asked to accept. It was for them who represented the people, and it was with confidence that he left the decision with the House. (Cheers.)

"The Government were informed, before there was any question of mobilization, that there were present on the borders of German South-West Africa armed forces, and that at several points they were there in large numbers. Eventually they proceeded in the direction of Nakob, and took up a position on the border. It was a position which they had never taken up before. They entrenched themselves

there. A force crossed the borders and took possession of the kopjes in our territory in a southerly direction, and there these people were entrenched to-day, or were, at any rate, a few days ago. He only referred to these matters in order to point out what their position was. Those people had suddenly taken up that position. It appeared that some of the people living in German South-West Africa were notified to move deeper inland with their cattle. They refused to do so, and subsequently took refuge on one of the islands on a certain river within the Union of South Africa. A patrol of police subsequently attempted to take back the cattle of these people, whereupon a fight ensued, with the result that two men were killed. He referred to these matters in order to point out the hostile attitude which had been taken up without the least reason. He trusted the House and the public would understand the consequences. After very serious consideration of the request, they found there was only one reply that could be given. The war had been forced on the British Government. If Great Britain had ever entered on a war with clean hands, it was this one. (Hear, hear.) It was not necessary for him to explain the history of the whole position which had led to the present war; that had been done elsewhere by those on whom the responsibility rested, and he did not doubt that everyone in the House had read the correspondence referred to that afternoon by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, and that everyone had perused the official correspondence which had been published in London. If that had not been done, he hoped it would still be done. It was abundantly clear from the correspondence that the British Government did not want war. The British Government did its utmost to maintain peace.

"They were forced into this war by Germany.

(Hear, hear.) The war had been forced on them by Berlin. Had the proposals made by the British Government been accepted by Berlin, the war would never have taken place. This was not simply an argument; it was a fact clearly proved by the correspondence to which he had referred. Only when war broke out between the Powers, and when it became impossible without loss of prestige and honour to remain out of the war, did the Imperial Government take the extreme step. (Hear, hear.) By the decision the whole of the British Empire was involved in war. The war was undertaken, not with any desire of aggrandisement, nor with any desire to acquire more land. The desire which had been charged to the discredit of the British Government was absolutely unfounded. It was declared because the British Government were bound to carry out solemn treaties concluded with other people. They had undertaken the protection of other nations who were trampled on, and whose ground had been occupied by a large armed force without the smallest attention being paid to the public there. The war was undertaken by the British Government in order to maintain the right, and it was with that view that the British Government accepted these great responsibilities.

"He wanted the House to feel that, whatever step the Government took, there was no desire whatever to acquire fresh possessions. It was unnecessary to tell the House every step that the Government might possibly take. Everything would be done, of course, with the greatest prudence and tact. Meantime, no one could deny that their future was being decided on the battle-fields of Europe.

"There was no one in the country who had not realized that. There was no one who could think that the victory of either side would not reflect itself

in the future of this country in one way or another. Proceeding, General Botha said that he wished to say a few words in appreciation of the excellent spirit of co-operation which during the past few weeks had been manifesting itself in South Africa. If one looked back twelve or thirteen years to the day when the two great white races of this country were opposed to each other in a great struggle, one could not help but feel thankful for the great change that had come about, and the great co-operation which to-day prevailed. (Cheers.) The Prime Minister went on to appeal to everyone to be as tolerant as possible in the days like the present. No one could blame the Afrikander of Dutch origin who did not feel exactly the same way as the English Afrikander. People should not say, because Dutch Afrikanders did not feel the same way as English Afrikanders, that the Dutch Afrikanders were disloyal. There was no question of disloyalty. He knew the people of South Africa, and he believed in them; and, although there might be many who in the past had been hostile towards the British flag, he could vouch for them that they would ten times rather be under the British flag to-day than under the German flag. He wished to appeal to them all for greater tolerance than ever before. (Cheers.) In times like the present rumours sprang up from everywhere, like the wind. One did not know where these rumours came from —rumours in which there was no truth at all, and which could only have the effect of doing the greatest possible harm. He asked everybody to disbelieve such rumours. (Cheers.) There was another point he wished to refer to. They had in this country a large number of German people who were British subjects, and who had always co-operated for the welfare and prosperity of the country. In fact, they had been true and faithful assistants to South Africa.

(Cheers.) Therefore, he was grateful that the Minister of Defence had told certain Germans in Natal that their services would not be required in the present trouble for the Defence Force, because surely it would not be right perhaps to make brother fight against brother, or father against sons. (Cheers.) He wished to impress upon the House that they would not wage war on persons. To-day they were to fight the German Crown, which was responsible for this vindictive war. (Loud cheers.) Great confidence had been placed in the people of South Africa. They had received the Constitution under which they could create a great nationality in this country. Let them stand by that Constitution. He felt that the people of South Africa would prove themselves worthy of the confidence placed in them. The British Government, after having given them their Constitution, had regarded them as a free people, as a sister State. They were free in South Africa, and on South Africa depended its own future.

"In regard to the attitude of the British Government, he wished to refer to one incident. In July last this country had tried to take up a loan of four millions, but had succeeded only in getting two millions. It would be fatal, of course, in the present conditions to go into the market for money, and they all knew the financial difficulties with which the Union was faced. However, the British Government had come to their assistance, and had lent them seven millions. (Loud cheers.) That was a spirit of co-operation and brotherhood which had always animated the Imperial authorities. (Loud cheers.) Its own difficulty notwithstanding, the British Government had come forward to help South Africa out of its embarrassment. It would be indeed disastrous if a feeling of racialism were again to be revived in this country. Let them all stand together

for the welfare of the whole. Proceeding, General Botha said that he thought that it was the duty of this House to do its utmost to see that South Africa came with honour out of this war. (Cheers.) There was just one other point he wished to mention. In a war like this, of course, heavy sufferings and great privations must be inflicted. He felt that it was the duty of South Africa to do something to relieve that suffering, and therefore he would propose that they do something and make some contribution of some kind towards the relief of the sufferings. Their contribution might be in the way of mealies, tobacco for the soldiers, and brandy for medical purposes. Farmers had come forward offering their products if the Government would undertake the despatch. (Cheers.) Concluding, General Botha said that he wished hon. members to remember that in the past the Belgian and French peoples had come forward with many gifts to relieve the suffering in this country, and he trusted that the attitude South Africa was going to take up would be an honourable one in the eyes of the whole world. (Loud cheers.)"

No other speech calls for mention till we come to that of General Hertzog. The leader of the Opposition (Sir T. Smart) and the leader of the Labour party supported the Premier, and it was left to General Hertzog to astonish the House by moving the adjournment of the debate on the plea that " the motion of the Prime Minister had come as a great surprise to him, and time should be given to consider it."

His motion for adjournment was rejected, and General Hertzog then delivered himself in the following terms:

" He said the House had been called upon to decide whether or not South Africa was going to declare war

on German South-West Africa. An obligation to declare war in no way rested upon South Africa. This country knew the meaning of war too well to go lightly into a war like this. This was not a question of Imperialism; it was a matter concerning the people of this country. Where it concerned a subject of this importance, where the ruination of this country might be the outcome of this resolution, he claimed the House should be given an opportunity of carefully considering the point at issue. The Government was asking authority to send an expeditionary force into German South-West Africa. That was what the resolution amounted to. Yet the Minister had claimed that they were not aiming at securing fresh territory; and in how far, he asked, would such an invasion assist the Empire in the least? He claimed that the population of the country, especially in the Free State, was not properly armed, and was unprepared for any emergencies that might arise. The condition of the people of the Free State was a most serious one as the result of the drought, and these people should not be dragged into a ruinous war. His duty in the first place was to his own people, and not to the Empire. What was the position in Europe at present? No one knew the position to-day. They were told one thing one day, and something else the next. What if the Allies were hopelessly beaten to-day? Would the Government then ask the House to allow the country to go into this? As to the question of right, he was not going to say whether the Allies were in the right or in the wrong. What war had ever been waged in which both sides could not claim to be in the right? No one had the right to ask this country, which had hardly closed the door on the miseries caused by a war of three years, to do more than any other Dominion had done. As to the question touched upon by the Prime Minis-

ter whether South Africa would sooner be under the British or the German flag, he held that General Botha had not expressed himself well, and he claimed that no one would tolerate that the British flag was removed from this country. The Government should in the first place consult the people of the country, and the views voiced by the Prime Minister were certainly not those of the Free State. He moved the following amendment:

" 'This House, while fully prepared to support any measures necessary for the defence against any attack on Union territory, is of opinion that any action in the way of an attack on German territory in South Africa will be in conflict with the interests of the Union.' "

One more speech of a memorable debate—doubly remarkable from the fact that several of those who took part were shortly afterwards rebels in the field against the Government—is that of General Smuts (Minister of Defence), who replied to a speech by the famous " Piet " Grobler, of Rustenburg, who had seconded General Hertzog's amendment in a speech as pro-German in tone as even the Kaiser himself could desire.

" General Smuts said he had followed the previous speaker with the greatest interest. During the final stages of the Boer War, Mr. Grobler had been in Europe, and he, for one, should remember the reception which the late President Kruger had received from the people of France. Mr. Grobler should remember that the late President at one time wished to proceed to Germany to plead the cause of the two Republics, and should also remember the attitude taken up by the German Government, which threat-

ened President Kruger with arrest. Did not Mr. Grobler remember, too, that when General Buller's army failed in Natal, it was the German Kaiser who told Lord Roberts what he ought to do, and who told the British Generals that they were quite wrong to proceed with the campaign in Natal, but that they should attack the Boers in the Free State? He (General Smuts) would have thought that such a man that had so continually been in contact with the old President, who knew the enthusiastic reception given to President Kruger in France, and who was so well acquainted with what had taken place, would have spoken at least a few words of appreciation in regard to the plight of that country.

"But no; instead the hon. member came before the House as a German advocate, and put the case of the Germans before the House. What would the late President Kruger have said had he been present to hear the words of the hon. member? But one never knew where political feelings might lead one. But if this was true with regard to the hon. member for Rustenburg, then it was even more true about the hon. member for Smithfield (General Hertzog). The speech made by that hon. member was quite inexplicable, and it had made a most painful impression on him, and, he was sure, on the whole country. What must their friends in France, Holland, and Belgium think when they read that speech? The Prime Minister proposed that they should send a message of appreciation to the King of Belgium in regard to the heroic defence of Belgium against the motiveless and unprincipled attack by Germany; and then General Hertzog said that he did not know that Germany was not in the right, because he was a lawyer, and had learned to look at matters from both sides, and for that reason he did not wish to give a word of appreciation to those who were of the

same race as himself, many of whom had been killed in thousands, whose houses and towns had been devastated, and whose glorious museums and universities had been burned. (Loud cheers.) These were the people (he wished to remind the hon. member) who were to-day engaged in a gigantic struggle for that freedom which was so dear to them—a freedom which they in this country had secured through blood and tears. (Cheers.)

"He (General Smuts) sincerely hoped that the people of Belgium and France would never read the words of the hon. member for Smithfield, 'because, unlike the people of South Africa, these others did not know him,' went on the Minister. 'We know that he is simply animated by political hatred of the Government. His political hatred of the Government is so great that nothing will stop him, and I am not sure that, if the Prime Minister had taken up an opposite attitude to that which he placed before us last night, the hon. member for Smithfield would not have taken up the very attitude which he now so strongly condemns.' (Cheers.) The other countries, however, did not know him, and that was why he (General Smuts) so much regretted that such a discord should have been struck. As to the question of sympathy, he was sure that the people of South Africa would give their fullest sympathy to that little country—Belgium—which had so much in common with South Africa. (Cheers.) 'Our mother countries,' proceeded General Smuts, 'have been attacked.' Many of us descend from the people of Belgium; a good deal of French blood flows in our veins; and, further, England, our Mother Country, has been forced into this war, and that is why this resolution has been proposed. In the past we have not feared large odds against us; we have not, because the numbers opposed to us were large, shrunk from

doing our duty. We fought until the day came when we practically secured what we fought for—what we have to-day—that liberty which is so dear to us all. (Cheers.)

"When we made peace at Vereeniging, and when we had to sign a treaty, I said that South Africa had fought for its liberty. You will find my words recorded. I said that liberty had been guaranteed, and here we are to-day as a free people, able to develop as we please,a nd able to do as we please; and opposed to us is a military compulsion and autocracy which is threatening to suppress and isolate the smaller nations—in fact, which is doing its utmost to annihilate all smaller nations. Now, Mr. Speaker, the question which has to be decided is whether we are going to do our duty, not only to ourselves, but to the whole world; whether we are to maintain our rights which we have fought for. The question is whether this military autocracy is going to be 'baas,' or whether we are going to keep the liberty for which we have sacrificed much blood. We have shed many tears to secure what we have now. Are we, Mr. Speaker, going to keep what we have, or are we going to say, 'Let them take it'? (Loud cheers.) If we act as cowards and shrink from our duty, then, Mr. Speaker, we do not deserve these rights and the liberties which we enjoy.

"Proceeding, General Smuts said that the hon. member for Smithfield had declared that the advice given by the Imperial Government in regard to occupying military positions in German South-West Africa was the acme of absurdity. Of course, the hon. member was a good judge of what was absurd, because a greater combination of absurdities than that propounded by General Hertzog he (General Smuts) had never listened to. (Cheers and laughter.) The hon. member had said: 'This was not our war.'

He had said that the Government had asked the House to agree to wage war on peaceful neighbours. Surely the hon. member knew the legal position as well as anybody else did, and he could not understand how the hon. member could say that this was not their war.

" Whose war was it, then, if it was not their war ? The only question was whether they were going to do their duty or not ? Who was the aggressor ? Surely it was quite clear from every piece of evidence which had been put before them that Germany was the aggressor, and he wished to refer them to His Majesty's message to the Dominions, to show that until the very end England and the British Government had done their very utmost to keep out of the war. Proceeding, General Smuts referred to the happenings in Europe, and went at some length over the attitude taken up by the British Foreign Minister (Sir Edward Grey). Right until the last Sir Edward Grey had used his best efforts to secure an amicable settlement, and even on the last day (July 31) such a settlement seemed not only possible, but probable. All the other States concerned had agreed that if Austria was allowed to get as far as Belgrade, the forces of Austria would stop there, and a conference of the Powers concerned would be called to see what could be done to come to an amicable arrangement. The only question which Russia was concerned with at the time was the problem of the rights of Servia. Russia, Servia, Austria, and France had agreed to the suggestions of Sir Edward Grey, but Germany had refused, and had sent an ultimatum to France and Russia; and thus all attempts to avoid the terrible carnage, this terrible and miserable war, on the part of England had failed. And yet the hon. member said he did not know whether Germany was not right ! Surely he could see that Great Britain had

done its utmost to preserve peace. And then he said this country would be the aggressor! What had happened? It was not long ago when the borders of the Union had been crossed by a German force, which had entrenched itself on South African territory. No measures yet had been taken to move these people, but Parliament would, he was sure, give the Government the right to take the proper steps in this regard. And, then, did the hon. members know that there were German vessels in Union waters? Did they not know that, but for the protection afforded by the British Fleet, it would not be safe to send goods from here?

"What were these cruisers doing in South African waters? He would tell them that the German cruisers were, by means of the wireless station in German South-West Africa, in continual communication with Germany, and that the South African trade and other trade was continually being threatened. As a consequence, the Government had waited, but the time had now come for them to do their duty. (Loud cheers.) When the war broke out, the Union Government said to the Imperial Government: 'We do not require your troops here; you may be able to use them better. We are in a position to look after ourselves. So the British Government said: 'There is work for you to do.' These points were of great importance, and the sooner the danger which they constituted at present was removed, the better it would be. General Hertzog said that it was absurd, but he (General Smuts) was sure that they would not be safe here, and their coast would not be safe, until these wireless communications had stopped, and until all the points referred to were in their possession. (Cheers.) 'And the Government has decided,' the Minister went on, 'with the consent of Parliament, to make an end to these communica-

tions.' General Hertzog had said that we were going to sacrifice a lot of life by sending a force to German South-West Africa. If the Minister had understood him aright, he also believed him to have said that it would be far better to send an expeditionary force to Europe to help the Allies; there they would not lose lives. If they sent their South African veterans to Europe to fight there on the sanguinary battle-fields, would they come back unscathed? Surely there was a much less danger of a loss of life here than in Europe. On the one hand, if they complied with the request of the Imperial Government, they greatly assisted the Allies; whilst if they did send soldiers to Europe, he was afraid they would not be much good, because there were quite sufficient men there to fight the battle. (Cheers.) Of course, they could refuse the request which had been made to them. They were a free Government. But he was sure that the people of South Africa would only be too pleased to do their duty. (Loud cheers.) And he trusted that the hon. members would not listen to the German advocates who had stood up in the House. It had been said that the Prime Minister did not represent the opinions of South Africa, and that he certainly did not represent five per cent. of the opinion of the Free State; it was contended that South Africa was German in its sympathy. He (General Smuts) was sure that, whatever their sympathies were, the people of this country would do their duty, as they had always done, and the better the people understood the position, the better they would do their duty.

"All this German talk, all this rumour of German sympathies, he maintained, had been spread by German commercial agents and German dealers, and he sincerely hoped that the people would realize that these German agents were placing a dagger into the

heart of South Africa which they were eager to press home. The hon. member for Smithfield had alleged that the people of South Africa were not properly armed. Was this, asked General Smuts, meant as information to the enemy ? If so, he would advise the Germans not to place too much reliance on that information. (Loud cheers.) Of course, he could assure the House that the population was far better off than anyone might deduce from a statement which had been made since the Defence Act was passed. The Department of Defence had distributed no less than 70,000 rifles among the burghers. In regard to the question of native unrest, he would simply refer to the position on the border of Basutoland, and would tell the House that there was an absolute state of peace there, and that there was no unrest whatever. The information in possession of the Government was that there was perfect quiet everywhere amongst all the tribes. Of course, one heard a good many rumours; but in times like the present one was always bound to hear rumours, which one should not attach too much importance to. Recently representations had been made that more rifles should be distributed among the farmers living near native territories, and the result had been that large numbers of rifles had been handed out to the magistrates of these districts. At the same time, he wished to emphasize that nobody could foresee what might happen, and a large number of rifles had been kept in stock in the event of emergency, so that if dark days did arrive, there was no need for alarm on that score. Proceeding, General Smuts said that in one respect he agreed with Mr. Grobelaar, and that was that they must not wage war on the German people, because it would be an evil day for South Africa if they did that. They waged war on the German Empire and the German Government. He could tell the House that

the Government of this country was in possession of information which clearly showed that the German Government had had its eyes on South Africa for many days. Hon. members should understand that the Government had much more information than private people, and, without giving away secrets, he could tell this House that the German Government had had, and still had, very eager eyes on the Union. South Africa was a jewel, and a good many wars in the past had been waged over its possession. Possibly there might be serious wars to come about the possession of this sub-continent. He hoped, however, that nobody in this country would take up a bitter attitude against the German citizens in South Africa. Germans here had become naturalized, and many more would, if opportunity allowed, still become naturalized. In conclusion, General Smuts said he wished to make it clear that in this war South Africa was not the aggressor. Attacks had been made on South Africa, and it was their duty to repel these attacks, and to take up that attitude which their sense of duty and their sense of honour told them. (Loud cheers.)"

The amendment of General Hertzog (as slightly modified by a further amendment by Mr. Fremantle, of Uitenhage) was rejected by 92 votes to 12. It is important to note that the minority included seven Free State members, also Piet Grobler of Rustenburg (Transvaal), and Messrs. Fremantle and Marais, of the Cape. Some of this minority we shall hear of again before long.

CHAPTER IV

Maritz on the frontier—Treachery at work—Curious Beyers rumour—Warrant for his arrest ?—Delarey attitude—Beyers' resignation—General Smuts' reply—Delarey killed—Significant funeral—The judicial inquiry—Beyers and his car—Pelted with eggs—Row in the Opera House.

The moment the Government's motion was carried the spirit of rebellion must have taken concrete form. We know that Colonel S. G. Maritz was at this time on the Union borders with a force raised and being raised by him from among the farmers of the district. The Government had, in fact, advanced him considerable sums of money for the purpose of equipping his men in the shortest possible space of time and getting them across the sandy desert and holding up the German raiders until other Union troops could be brought up. Maritz was as good as his word. After a long conference with Beyers at Pretoria, he got together a very fine body of mounted men, and hurried with all speed to the frontier. Exactly what went on there is not possible to say, but it is quite certain that secret negotiations were going on between Maritz, the German military Commander in German South-West, the Governor of that territory, General Beyers (Commandant-General of the Union forces), and some others.

How the Government came to hear of this mys-

terious correspondence does not concern us. Suffice it to say that knowledge of something sinister going on was brought to their notice at a very early stage, and it may be news to some of the rebels to know that Beyers—*and some others*—were being closely shadowed for weeks before they made any overt move. In fact, it would have given them a fright if they had known how many of their covert acts were known to the Government.

Naturally not the slightest hint of this came to the ears of the public, who were lulled into a sense of quiet contentment by the active preparations made by the Government for the expedition against German South-West. The towns were crowded with men in khaki, recruiting proceeded briskly, and there was general enthusiasm. Only it was noticed in Pretoria that General Beyers seemed to require an unusual number of conferences with certain men from the country, and curious rumours began to get about with regard to him. He was under grave suspicion. Then suddenly a rumour went flashing through Pretoria and Johannesburg that a warrant was out for his arrest for treason. Beyers was furious, and sent a letter to the papers threatening with all the terrors of the law any person repeating the slander. But the many-tongued public went on repeating the story, and then in certain select circles they also repeated a little rumour to the effect that Beyers, while proceeding to Upington to visit Maritz, was stopped on the way by peremptory telegraphic instructions conveyed to him by a certain person in uniform. And they smiled meaningly when asked,

"What would have happened to Beyers if he had refused to return?" Perhaps the second rumour partly explains the first one.

From this time onwards a definite rebellion plot was being organized in secret, Beyers being the arch-traitor in the Transvaal, De Wet in the Free State, and Maritz on the German South-West frontier, the last named doing the direct negotiations with the Germans and keeping his friends fully advised. The idea was that Beyers and Delarey had the Western Transvaal burghers in the hollow of their hands, that De Wet could raise the whole of the Free State as supporters of the Hertzog policy, and Maritz imagined he could secure the allegiance of the north-western portion of Cape Colony. Associated with Beyers was Major Kemp, a District Staff Officer, who had been preparing for the scheme for some time, as the defections of his carefully-selected officers in the various Rifle Associations clearly shows.

Meantime Beyers set to work to gain over Delarey, who, after his lecture by General Botha, had grown lukewarm in the "cause." Beyers proceeded to undermine the old General's resolve through the medium of religious arguments. Even as far back as August 11 he had written to Delarey to come and see him (and apparently to hear personally from Maritz that he "had made arrangements with the Germans," for this is what Beyers told one of the other conspirators).

Meantime Parliament was not quite over. On September 12 the Senate adopted General Botha's resolution by twenty-four votes to five, General

General Delarey.

General Hertzog.

Delarey not voting, " as he did not wish to embarrass the Government." General Delarey clearly was very ill at ease. He left Capetown before Parliament had finished its work, in response to a telegram from Beyers, and travelled to Johannesburg. It is interesting now to recall a conversation he had with Senator Munnik, who had been unable to go to Capetown owing to indisposition, but who visited Johannesburg for a few hours, and there met Delarey, who was very despondent at the turn affairs had taken in Parliament, and that was why he had left before the work was finished. Senator Munnik questioned him as to what had happened, and Delarey said he had consistently been against the invasion of German South-West Africa. When asked for the names of those in the Senate who voted on that side, he gave them, to which Mr. Munnik responded: " Why, those are the Hertzogites! Have you joined that party ?"

" No," replied Delarey. " On this question they are fighting against Louis Botha and Jan Smuts, pure and simple. I am fighting against what I think is a wrong principle."

Mr. Munnik urged upon him that the Germans had invaded the Union, and that we were bound to take steps. Mr. Munnik adds: " He looked hard at me for a few seconds and then said, slowly and deliberately: ' Look here, old Munnik, German South-West is bound to come into the melting-pot at the end of the present war, and I don't think at this stage we should sacrifice the life of one colonist, whatever his nationality, for it.' "

Almost simultaneously with Delarey's arrival in Johannesburg a bombshell was thrown at the public and the Government by the publication in the three Dutch papers printed in Pretoria of the following extraordinary effusion signed by Beyers and addressed to General Smuts, but handed to the Dutch Press twenty-four hours before it was handed to the Defence Department. The object of this was to try and get the letter circulated among the Dutch-speaking people before the Government had had time to issue an antidote. A truly "slim" method. But the Government officials were too quick, for they promptly stopped the sale of the papers in the streets, seized the copies in the newspaper offices, and what was of far more importance, seized the huge bundles already in the post addressed to country readers in the Transvaal and the Free State, especially the latter. At the request of the Government the English papers refrained from publishing the letter until a few days later, when it was officially issued with General Smuts' reply, as follows:

GENERAL BEYERS' LETTER.

PRETORIA,
15*th September*, 1914.

The Right Honourable General J. C. Smuts, Minister of Defence, Pretoria.

HONOURABLE SIR,

You are aware that during the month of August last I told you and General Botha by word of mouth I disapproved of the sending of com-

mandoes to German South-West Africa for the purpose of conquering that territory. I was on the point then of resigning, but hearing that Parliament was to be called together, I decided to wait, hoping that a way out of the difficulty would be found. To my utmost surprise, however, Parliament confirmed the resolution adopted by the Government—namely, to conquer German South-West Africa without any provocation towards the Union from the Germans.

Government must be aware that by far the great majority of the Dutch-speaking people of the Union decidedly disapprove of our crossing the frontier; and the two conferences of commandants recently held at Pretoria bore eloquent testimony to this. I challenge the Government—by an appeal to the people, and without making use of compulsion—to obtain any other result.

It is said that Great Britain has taken part in this war for the sake of right and justice, in order to protect the independence of smaller nations and to comply with treaties. But the fact that three Ministers of the British Cabinet have resigned shows that even in England there is a strong minority which could not be convinced of the righteousness of a war with Germany.

History teaches us, after all, that whenever it suits her interests Great Britain is always ready to protect smaller nations; but, unhappily, history also relates instances in which the sacred rights of independence of smaller nations have been violated and treaties disregarded by that same Empire. In proof of this I have only to indicate how the independence of the South African Republic and the Orange Free State was violated, and of what weight the Sand River Convention was.

It is said that war is being waged against the

"barbarity" of the Germans. We have forgiven, but not forgotten, all the barbarities perpetrated in this our own country during the South African War. With very few exceptions all farms, not to mention many towns, were so many Louvains of which we now hear so much.

At this critical moment it is made known in Parliament that our Government was granted a loan of seven million pounds sterling by the British Government. This is very significant. Anyone can have his own thoughts about that.

In the absence of legitimate grounds for the annexation policy of the Government, you endeavour to intimidate the public by declaring that Government possesses information showing that Germany has decided—should opportunity arise—to annex South Africa. My humble opinion is that this will be hastened if, from outside, we invade German territory without having been provoked thereto by the Germans. And as to the alleged German annexation scheme, this is nothing more than the result of the usual national suspicion attending such matters.

The allegations made in Parliament, namely, that the Germans have already crossed our frontier, are ungrounded (see the Official Report of the Information Bureau, corroborated by Lieutenant-Colonel Maritz and his officers, who are on and near the frontier).

Apparently Government longed for some transgression by the Germans of German South-West Africa, but have been disappointed in this, for so far not a single German soldier has transgressed our frontier. As you know very well, the report is perfectly correct regarding an involuntary transgression of the frontier some time ago, and the tendering of an apology for doing so.

Whatever may happen in South Africa, the war

will decide in Europe in any case. So if Germany triumphs, and should decide to attack us, then—even if Great Britain should be unable to help us—we shall at least have a sacred and clean cause in defending our country to the utmost, provided we stay inside our borders meanwhile. In case we are attacked, our people will arise as one man in defence of its rights. Besides, I am convinced that a commando of about 8,000 Germans, as at present stationed in German territory, will not be so foolish as to attempt an attack upon our country.

I have always said—and repeated at Booysens recently—that if the Union is attacked, Boer and Briton will defend this country side by side, and in such case I will deem it a great honour and privilege to take up my place at the head of our forces in defence of my fatherland.

I accepted the post as Commandant-General under our Defence Act, the first section of which provides that our forces can only be employed in defence of the Union. My humble opinion is that this section cannot thus be changed by informal resolution of Parliament, such being contrary to Parliamentary procedure. So the Defence Act does not allow us to go and fetch the enemy over the frontier, and to light the fire in that way; but, should the enemy penetrate into our country, it will be our duty to drive him back and pursue him in his own territory.

In his speech, General Botha speaks about the help we had from the Belgians and French after the South African War. That assistance is still appreciated by me and by all our people, but we must not forget that the Germans also were not behindhand, and have always been well disposed towards us. So why should we deliberately make enemies of them ?

As circumstances are, I see no way of taking the offensive; and as I sincerely love my country and

people I most strongly protest against the sending of the Union Citizen Forces over the frontier. Who can foretell where the fire the Government has decided to light shall end ?

For the reasons enumerated above I feel constrained to resign my post as Commandant-General, as also my commissioned rank. For me this is the only way of faith, duty, and honour towards my people, of which mention was made by General Botha.

I have always tried to do my duty according to my best convictions, and it sorely grieves me that it must end in this way.

I have the honour to be,
Honourable Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(*Signed*) C. F. Beyers.

General Smuts' Reply.

19*th September*, 1914.

Sir,

It was with regret that I received your letter of the 15th instant, tendering your resignation as the Commandant-General Union Defence Forces, and as an officer of the Union.

The circumstances under which that resignation took place and the terms in which you endeavour to justify your action tend to leave a very painful impression. It is true that it was known to me that you entertained objections against the war operations in German South-West Africa, but I never received the impression that you would resign. On the contrary, all the information in possession of the Government was communicated to you, all plans were discussed with you, and your advice was followed to a large extent. The principal officers were appointed on your recommendation and with your concurrence, and the plan of operations which is now being followed

is largely the one recommended by yourself at a conference of officers.

My last instruction to you before I left for Capetown to attend the special session of Parliament was that in my absence you should visit certain regiments on the German border, and it was well understood between us that immediately the war operations were somewhat further advanced, so that co-operation amongst various divisions would be practicable, you would yourself undertake the chief command in German South-West Africa. The attitude of the Government after this remained unchanged, and it was approved by Parliament after full discussion. One would have expected that this approval would make the matter easier for you; but now I find that you anticipated that Parliament would disapprove of the policy of the Government, and that your disappointment in this became the reason for your unexpected action. In order to make your motives clearer, the reasons for your resignation were explained in a long political argument, which was immediately communicated to the Press, and came into the hands of the Government long after publication. I need not tell you that all these circumstances in connection with your resignation have made a most unpleasant impression on my colleagues and myself.

But this unpleasant impression has been even aggravated by the allegations contained in your letter. Your bitter attack on Great Britain is not only entirely baseless, but it is the more unjustifiable coming as it does in the midst of a great war from the Commandant-General of one of the British Dominions. Your reference to barbarous acts during the South African War cannot justify the criminal devastation of Belgium, and can only be calculated to sow hatred and division among the people of South Africa. You forget to mention that since the

South African War the British people gave South Africa her entire freedom under a constitution which makes it possible for us to realize our national ideals along our own lines, and which, for instance, allows you to write with impunity a letter for which you would without doubt be liable in the German Empire to the extreme penalty.

As regards your other questions, they have been answered and disposed of in Parliament. From these discussions it will be apparent that neither the British Empire nor South Africa was the aggressor in this struggle. War was, in the first instance, declared by Austria-Hungary, and thereafter by Germany, under circumstances in which the British Government employed its utmost powers to maintain the peace of Europe and to safeguard the neutrality of Belgium.

So far as we ourselves are concerned, our coast is threatened, our mail-boats are arrested, and our borders are invaded by the enemy.

This latter incident did not occur, as you say, in an involuntary manner and with an apology, which latter, at any rate, was never tendered to the Government.

Under these circumstances it is absurd to speak of aggressive action on the part of the Union, seeing that, together with the British Empire, we have been drawn, against our wish and will, and entirely in self-defence, into this war.

As regards your insinuation concerning the loan of £7,000,000 which the British Government was kind enough to grant us, and for which the public of the Union, as evidenced recently in Parliament, are most grateful, it is of such a despicable nature that there is no necessity to make any comment thereon. It only shows to what extent your mind has been obscured by political bias.

You speak of duty and honour. My conviction is

that the people of South Africa will, in these dark days when the Government as well as the people of South Africa are put to the supreme test, have a clearer conception of duty and honour than is to be deduced from your letter and action. For the Dutch-speaking section in particular I cannot conceive anything more fatal and humiliating than a policy of lip-loyalty in fair weather and a policy of neutrality and pro-German sentiment in days of storm and stress. It may be that our peculiar internal circumstances and our backward condition after the great war will place a limit on what we can do; but, nevertheless, I am convinced that the people will support the Government in carrying out the mandate of Parliament, and in this manner, which is the only legitimate one, fulfil their duty to South Africa and to the Empire, and maintain their dearly won honour unblemished for the future.

Your resignation is hereby accepted.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(*Signed*) J. C. Smuts,
Minister of Defence.

To the Hon. General C. F. Beyers, Pretoria.

The day General Beyers handed in his resignation (Tuesday, September 15) a curious thing happened. General Delarey (who knew about the resignation the previous day, for he referred to it in his conversation with Senator Munnik) sent a message to General Beyers requesting him to come over to Johannesburg and see him. General Beyers replied that he could not do so, as he had just handed in his resignation and wished to remain on the spot to await developments. He, however, sent over his motor-

car and had Delarey conveyed to Pretoria. When Delarey reached the capital and met Beyers, he told the latter that he was very despondent and wanted someone to talk to, to relieve his mind. "In his bedroom he fell on his knees and prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ to guide him and show him which road to follow in these hours of darkness." (We quote General Beyers' actual words.) "Subsequently he took up his Bible, which fell open at II. Chronicles, chapter vi., verse 32, reading on to Chronicles vii. and viii. General Delarey again took courage, and apparently became quite happy and content at heart. The Lord in these chapters had clearly shown Delarey what road to follow."

Whatever the road was, it meant leaving Pretoria at once, and at 7.30 that same evening Delarey and Beyers left Pretoria in Beyers' motor-car, their destination being Lichtenburg *viâ* Potchefstroom. No one but themselves knew of their departure. They sped along the main road to the outskirts of Johannesburg, and at the suburb of Orange Grove were challenged by an armed policeman, who called upon the chauffeur to halt. Curiously enough, he took not the slightest notice, but increased speed and dashed on. He subsequently stated that he had received instructions not to stop for anyone. After this challenge he followed a somewhat tortuous and unusual route through Johannesburg, and emerged on the western side of the town near Langlaagte, where another armed policeman called upon them to halt. Again this strange chauffeur ignored the challenge and sped on. A few yards farther on another

armed policeman barred their way and called out "Halt!" The chauffeur took not the slightest notice, but continued his career. The policeman sprang aside just in time to prevent being run down, and as the car passed him he made a lunge at the tyre with his fixed bayonet. The impact hurled him aside without stopping the car, which raced on ahead. Police-Constable Drury was not to be treated like that, so he slipped in a cartridge, and, taking aim as the car passed within the glare of an electric light, fired. The car sped on, but six hundred yards farther on it came to a halt, turned round, and came up to the policeman, who, holding his rifle ready, asked grimly: "Are you going to stop this time?" And, to the policeman's amazement, General Beyers put his head out of the car and said: "I am General Beyers. This is General Delarey, whom you have shot. I was taking him to his farm."

General Delarey was stone dead, shot through the back. When they lifted him out of the car and removed his clothing, a portion of the casing of the bullet fell out of his coat. There was an ugly wound in his back showing where he had been struck, and a big hole in the back of the car clearly proved that the bullet had first struck the ground and then ricochetted upwards, the bullet being torn to pieces as it passed through the metal panel of the car. Spectators of the scene said General Beyers looked stunned and as though he had received a mortal blow. He had held the dead body of his friend in his arms until the police-station was reached, and helped to lift the body out. Then he turned to Major Douglas of the

police and said: "Here I am. What do you want with me? What instructions have you got about me from Pretoria?" The remark is significant as indicating that he imagined that the police were after him. Because of his letter of resignation at this critical juncture? Or because of his mission to Potchefstroom? He was the most surprised man in the world when informed that they had been mistaken for burglars and murderers.

General Beyers telephoned to Potchefstroom stating that General Delarey had been shot and he (Beyers) therefore could not come—a most important message this, simple enough as it sounded then. At Potchefstroom there were one thousand men of the Union Defence who had been called up for their annual training, and they were due to break camp on the following day and disperse to their homes. That was why Beyers and Delarey were so anxious to get to Potchefstroom that night. Beyers was questioned on the point at the judicial inquiry held in connection with the death of Delarey, and he admitted that they wanted to get there before the men dispersed, as they intended to hold a meeting "in order to tell the people what was going on, and to leave the matter in their hands." Asked to explain further, he said he was going down "as a private citizen and as a leader of the people to tell the people what had been going on in Parliament, and the reason for his own resignation." He added, "If the people had been consulted and given their assent to the invasion, there would have been no resignation."

General Delarey's body was removed to Pretoria,

FUNERAL OF GENERAL DELAREY PASSING THE PALACE OF JUSTICE ON THE WAY TO PRETORIA RAILWAY STATION.

and there accorded the honour of a preliminary public funeral attended by General Botha, General Smuts, all the other members of the Cabinet who had returned from Capetown, and the leading people of the city.

The body was then removed to Lichtenburg for burial. In the light of after events it was a significant ceremony. The Premier, General Smuts, General Beyers, General De Wet, and a host of other leading Dutchmen attended, and the funeral was attended not only by the whole of the people of the locality, but by some 12,000 people from outside, including hundreds carrying their rifles and looking in every way as if they were on commando. A notable feature of the proceedings was the presence on the Market Square of General Beyers' motor-car, with the hole in the back, the car being flanked with the old Republican flags of the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State.

At the interment funeral orations were made by General Botha, General De Wet, and others, all testifying to the sterling qualities of the deceased. Then General Beyers got up to speak, and told the people (as related above) just what had happened the previous evening with regard to the beginning and the end of that fatal evening's ride. Then his voice grew tense with passion as he touched upon the real motives of their proposed visit and vehemently hurled back the slander that already had been circulated that he and General Delarey were on their way to preach rebellion. It was the first time the ugly word had been mentioned in public, and the

vast audience heard it with a peculiar sense of impending danger. It gave even the members of the Cabinet a shock, and people noticed with strained attention that General Smuts lost no time in stepping to General Beyers' side and engaging him in earnest conversation.

If that great audience had known as much as General Smuts did, they might well have marvelled at Beyers' temerity in making use of such a phrase, for there is no doubt that he was going to Potchefstroom to preach rebellion. On the very morning of the day the two Generals left for Potchefstroom the Defence Force men had been urged by two of their Colonels to revolt, and many of them had agreed to do so, and jeered at those who would not join the movement. At the moment when Delarey received the fatal wound the conspirators at Potchefstroom were holding a secret meeting, and they were only awaiting the arrival of Beyers for him to take the lead and proclaim a Republic at four o'clock the following morning. It is now proved beyond a doubt that Beyers had been preparing for weeks past to start a rebellion at Potchefstroom on September 15. One of the conspirators has since admitted as much and more, for he says that he was present at a meeting on September 12, when Kemp told Beyers that " Manie " Maritz had made all his arrangements and would start the trouble on the frontier, and as soon as he started Delarey and Kemp would start in the Transvaal. In fact, the Potchefstroom camp had been specially ordered by Kemp to remain mobilized until the 16th, to await the arrival

of Delarey. That meeting of conspirators was held at Pretoria. Kemp and his companion, Lieutenant-Colonel Bezuidenhout (who afterwards was one of Kemp's " Generals "), returned to Potchefstroom the same evening (the 12th), and the following day Kemp wrote out his resignation; it bears date Sunday, September 13. On the following day Beyers received a telegram informing him that Maritz's secret emissary, Captain Joubert, was again on his way to Pretoria, and would arrive at Pretoria the same evening. This evidently satisfied Beyers that the great plot was now completed, and he thereupon called Captain Van Manen, took him to the house of a relative, and there dictated his letter of resignation from carefully prepared notes (but he did not hand it in until he had met Joubert on the following morning).

As bearing upon Beyers' intentions, he gave orders to his chauffeur to thoroughly overhaul his motor-car and " prepare for a long journey."

Captain Joubert arrived, saw General Beyers on the morning of the 15th, informed him from Maritz " that all arrangements had been made and all was ready " (*vide* statement of one of the chief conspirators), and thereupon Beyers sent Joubert over to Johannesburg to fetch Delarey.

Now we can understand why the old man, when he reached Beyers' room, prayed to the Lord for guidance; for between them Beyers and Joubert were leading him down steep and dark paths. He was the one man required to carry the waverers, for he was greatly beloved and wielded marvellous influence. He had resisted the tempter for long, but once away

from the strong influence of General Botha, he was as clay in the hands of the potter, when the crafty, ambitious Beyers got him alone and overcame his scruples with religion and superstition.

There are a few other points in connection with this second attempted rebellion that call for comment before we pass to the third and last phase. It will be observed that, according to the prophet Van Rensburg, *The Day* was to be connected with the figures 15. For that reason the rebellion was to have started at Lichtenburg on August 15. Delarey lost heart, and " the day " passed.

The prophet did not lose heart, but kept the hot-vision factory going strong, and got all the men quite excited with his tale of the beautiful maiden of bashful fourteen who floated from the Paardekraal monument at Krugersdorp, and, after an aerial flight towards German South-West, banked steeply and came to rest over Truerfontein—showing to the most confirmed sceptic that their fondest desires were to be realized ! Many believed, but there were some doubters, especially the women, who did not like their old men roused to patriotism by fairy stories about beautiful young girls. However, the prophet had much honour in his own country; sufficient indeed for the plotters at Potchefstroom to again pin their faith to that fateful 15. So they fixed September 15 for the great day, and awaited the arrival of Delarey with scarcely concealed excitement.

Everything was ready; the rebels had even practised ceremonial parades for the rebel Generals, all that day the men and horses were kept ready to move

at an instant's notice (several loyal officers had fled the camp during the previous night, having gathered what was afoot), and even the prophet had been invited to be present and see the realization of his prophecy. For some occult reason or other the old man refused to go, saying that he was not at all clear that that was the path he ought to follow!

The rebels grew terribly anxious as the day wore on and the rebellion hung fire, and no Delarey and no Beyers came on the scene. When the sun went down their spirits fell accordingly, and Kemp particularly was anxious and unsettled at the absence of his chief conspirators. The faithful ones decided that the hour was too late to do anything that night, but that the great act would be performed at four o'clock the following morning, and when their independence had been declared they would immediately march to Lichtenburg.

The majority of the men turned into bed, but not all the leaders. Some remained up, too anxious and restless to sleep. Among these was Kemp, whose horror when he received the brief telephone message from Langlaagte that General Delarey was dead nearly caused him to collapse. He crept along to the tent occupied by one of the chief conspirators with him, Lieutenant-Colonel Koch, and whispered in his ear. Koch sprang up with a startled cry, "Oh, God!" His fellow-officer (who was not in the plot) asked what was the matter, to which Koch replied in an awed voice: "General Delarey has been shot dead!"

* * * * *

So the prophet was not so far wrong after all, for the 15th had assuredly proved a fateful day—a day of dark cloud for Delarey, and he had returned home without his hat, and there was a carriage covered with flowers. Let the superstitious and the sceptics make as much or as little of it as they please.

* * * * *

To return to Delarey's funeral. Immediately after the funeral ceremony the members of the Government returned to Pretoria. Not so Beyers, De Wet, Kemp, Rev. Van Broekhuisen, and a host of other well-known Dutchmen, known to be strong supporters of the faction opposed to the Government. They held a secret meeting that night, and on the following day addressed a huge gathering of Boers. Not being restrained by the presence of the dead, they spoke out strongly and without much beating about the bush, and the officers of the Defence Force were advised by the Rev. Van Broekhuisen, among others, to immediately go to the Post Office and post their resignations. Many of those present did so, including Commandant F. G. Wolmarans.

It is a matter of interest to record that Kemp offered to withdraw his resignation immediately after he heard of Delarey's death, but received a courteous but terse reply from General Smuts, Minister of Defence, informing him that the country had no further need for his services.

Here a few words of explanation are necessary to explain the extraordinary set of circumstances that led up to the death of Delarey in such an utterly unexpected manner. Three nights previously

(September 12) two Johannesburg police-sergeants (Macleod and Mansfield) had been shot dead by a gang of desperadoes known as the Foster gang. A hue-and-cry had been raised, they had been traced to a cottage in the northern suburbs of that town, had shot dead another detective who tried to arrest them, and then escaped in a motor-car. Telephonic instructions had been sent to every police-station to send out patrols of armed policemen on every main road and to stop every motor-car and satisfy themselves that the passengers were not the wanted men. At this distance of time it does not very much matter whether the policemen had or had not instructions to shoot—a point very hotly debated at the time—but the fact remains that they did fire both on the east and on the west side of the town. On the East Rand, upon a car refusing to stop, they fired, and shot dead Dr. Grace, a well-known medical man of the district and son of the famous cricketer. He was accompanied by his wife at the time, and he was shot dead by her side; she had a narrow escape and sustained a slight wound. Almost at the same moment General Delarey received his death-wound on the western side of the town.

To say that a vast number of Dutchmen were furious at the death of their beloved General is to use a mild term. Many of them were convinced that the tale of the Foster gang was a myth, and that it had been concocted for the purpose of covering up the murder of Delarey, whereas the real man the Government wanted to kill was Beyers. It was even alleged that Delarey had been assassinated and was

shot from the front. To placate everybody the Government promised an exhaustive judicial inquiry. This was held by Mr. Justice Gregorowski partly at Johannesburg and in the concluding stages at Pretoria. The reason for this change of venue is interesting: General Beyers was afraid to go to Johannesburg, fearing that he would be mobbed by the Johannesburghers. He had good grounds for that fear.

The inquiry was long and exhaustive, and at the conclusion the learned Judge held that the inquiry had disclosed that the police had no instructions to fire on cars which refused to stop, that General Beyers deliberately refused to stop at Orange Grove, and again on the western side of the town of Johannesburg. The Judge expressed his opinion that it was very reprehensible on the part of both General Beyers as the owner of the car and his chauffeur not to obey the signals of the police. He exonerated Police-Constable Drury from any criminal intent.

Reference certainly must be made to Beyers' attitude during the proceedings at Pretoria. He seemed to treat the whole matter in a markedly superior manner, with a lofty attitude of amused contempt which excited many observers to wrath and caused him to be regarded with grave suspicion. His car with the hole in the back was quite a feature in Pretoria for some time, and there was a strong tendency on his part to " show off " in public. One of his supporters even applied an interesting test in the shape of a shilling subscription " for the purpose of having the hole repaired "—a pretty euphemism which deceived nobody.

Beyers was certainly wise to keep away from Johannesburg, for the people of that very Imperialistic city have a rough sort of humour about them that does not commend them to those who have earned their wrath. Beyers felt quite safe in Pretoria, where he had hosts of sympathizers, and the fact that he asked to be allowed to give his evidence in Pretoria indicates the difference in the strength of feeling in the two towns. However, the loyal element in Pretoria was as angry with Beyers as were the Johannesburghers, but in the capital the loyalists do not constitute a vast majority as they do in Johannesburg. Still there were quite sufficient to make things warm, and at a subsequent date (October 10) they made things particularly sultry at the Opera House, when Beyers was to have been the "lion" of the evening. It was rumoured that advantage was going to be taken of President Kruger's birthday to hold a sedition meeting, and to put certain resolutions, which were to be cabled to all parts of South Africa and to Europe as expressing the unanimous objection of the people of Pretoria to the proposed expedition to German South-West. There was a good deal of disorder, and singing of "God save the King" and "Rule, Britannia!" and when Beyers got up to speak he was greeted with a fusillade of eggs and tomatoes, from which squashy bombardment he was protected by kindly umbrellas held over him by sympathetic females.

There were free fights in the gallery, men were hurled down the stairs, one was thrown over the gallery into the dress circle, and then the police took

a hand and emptied the gallery of both friends and foes. The Loyalists formed up in the street despite a pouring rainstorm, and when Beyers emerged he was greeted with more eggs and tomatoes, and, despite the protection of the police, came in for some rough but not dangerous handling. The fact that the tyres of his famous motor-car had been punctured and slashed showed how deeply Beyers' attitude had sunk into the public mind, and how they had come to detest the sight of that notorious machine with the hole in the back.

Later on, when the rebellion was crushed, it was alleged that it was this meeting that drove both Beyers and " Japie " Fourie into rebellion. It seems a poor excuse for Dutchmen to make that they went into rebellion against their own Dutch Government because a few hundred Britishers did not behave themselves like good little boys at Sunday School. The meeting helped, of course. Everything that deepened the hatred of Beyers and Fourie against the British naturally tended to lead them along the path that ended in rebellion, but to allege that the rowdyism on that occasion was the chief, or even the compelling, cause is to put forward a proposition that is absurd. There is plenty of evidence to show that they were rebels at heart long before this, and they merely used this incident as a belated excuse for their conduct. General Beyers' letter of resignation ought to settle the point; then there is the contemplated visit to Potchefstroom so unexpectedly stopped; nor can we forget the meeting at Lichtenburg and the resignations of certain Defence Officers.

These things happened many weeks before the meeting in the Pretoria House.

Finally, what are we to make of the statement of Maritz, the first man to rebel, who informed two Union Defence officers after he had gone into rebellion that " he and certain other true South Africans had been in communication with the Germans for the past three years with the object of getting rid of the British flag? " Three years! That would just about coincide with the date of Beyers' reception by the Kaiser. It gives one furiously to think.

CHAPTER V

Rev. Van Broekhuisen's sermon—Powerful influences at work—Piet Grobler and the burghers—Disaster to Union forces—Mystery about Maritz—The German offer of ammunition and guns—A rebel circular—Loyalists prepare for trouble—Botha's steadying influence—His speech at Bank—De Wet at Potchefstroom—Free fights and many rumours—Government's quick movements—Maritz's treachery—Treaty between Maritz and the Germans—Colonel Brits defeats Maritz—Loyalists taken prisoners—Exciting experiences—Escapes across the desert—Maritz's dream of "Liberation."

THEN there was the preaching of a particularly significant sermon by the Rev. H. D. Van Broekhuisen of the Dutch Reformed Church, whose gospel was very much on the lines of Beyers' letter to General Smuts, coupled with sufficient texts from the Bible to give credulous people the idea that the Almighty was not on the Government side, and that he (Broekhuisen) had Divine warrant for saying so. "Go ye not out amongst them," was the burden of his text and tale, and to a people who invariably look to the predikant and the Bible for guidance in all difficulties such a sermon was much nearer practical sedition and rebellion than it would be in any other community. This sermon subsequently formed part of a charge of high treason against him.

It was given the advantage of extended circulation in the columns of the Dutch papers. It was clear

enough to anyone who was not blind or deaf that the powerful influences of eminent burghers, assisted by predikants and the Press, were at work to subvert the burghers from their allegiance to General Botha and the Government in the attitude they had taken up to send an expeditionary force to German South-West.

Another significant incident was the attitude of Piet Grobler, of Rustenburg, whose pro-German speech in the House of Assembly has been already referred to. The Government had sent out to the various Commandants and Field Cornets instructions to warn the burghers to present themselves for active service, and a quite considerable number had put in an appearance at the camp of concentration at Roberts' Heights. To them came Piet Grobler, harangued them, advised them not to go to German South-West, and generally put the firebrand of sedition among them. The burghers listened, and were talked over. Later in the day the curious sight was witnessed in Pretoria of an armed commando from Roberts' Heights anxious to hold a meeting in the Market Square. It was gently but firmly put to them that political meetings with firearms were not according to the tastes of the good people of Pretoria, and they were induced to go some miles out to the farm Sandfontein, there to discuss the matter further. This decision was greatly to the disappointment of a considerable number of mysterious visitors from outside, some of whom fully anticipated seeing some "fun." One of them frankly explained to the writer that he expected that the commando would

march upon Union Buildings " and have the matter out with Botha and Smuts." However, the little incident passed without trouble, though it was afterwards accounted unto Grobler for treason that he endeavoured to and did succeed in subverting the loyalty of many of the burghers on that occasion.

The atmosphere was electric and the air full of rumours. News came to hand of a serious reverse at Sandfontein (German territory, near the southern frontier), which had befallen a force operating from Port Nolloth. Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Grant and a considerable force of South African Mounted Rifles and Transvaal Horse Artillery were ambushed by the Germans, many killed and wounded, and the remainder taken prisoners.

It was a bad business, and set people talking. Rumours filtered through that the disaster might have been averted if Maritz had been on the alert and had moved in from the eastern side in co-operation with Grant. Britishers began to ask publicly, " Where is Maritz ?" To those who were anywhere near the inside of affairs, not the whereabouts but the actions of Maritz gave cause for considerable anxiety. It was clear that something extremely " fishy " was happening on the German border on that mysterious desert-side near Kakamas. Colour was lent to this supposition by the discovery that a seditious circular was being circulated among the farmers of the northern districts of Cape Colony in the following terms:

AN EARNEST APPEAL TO OUR FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN AND CO-RELIGIONISTS IN GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

The history of the nations of the earth has now arrived at the turning-point; the state of affairs indicates that no nation will be exempt from this. As regards the attitude which our countrymen in South Africa are going to take up, we are, thank God, no longer in the dark; we are now fully acquainted with matters. According to reliable and unquestionable information our Boer population is now going to free itself (and rightly so) from English dominion, which they have for so long unwillingly borne, for the time to which our forefathers looked so long has now arrived. But our people need assistance, and not only that, but they need a starting-point from which they can attack the enemy, should it be required. The required assistance our people can obtain from German South-West Africa; with the co-operation of the German Government we can provide our people with the best starting-point. The German Government gives every Boer free permission to go to the assistance of our country in the form of a Boer commando. Further, the German Government places artillery, ammunition, and all other requirements at our disposal without requiring payment. What more do we want? If we do not take action now we will be guilty of gross dereliction of duty towards our own flesh and blood.

Further, we, the undersigned, have the special permission of His Excellency the Governor to form a Volunteer Commando in German South-West Africa to go to the assistance of our countrymen, and therefore we call upon you, esteemed countryman, to come forward as a volunteer and do your duty in the matter. We do not for a moment doubt your readi-

ness. There are even many Germans who have signified their readiness once again to offer their lives in the cause of our South African people as they did in the last war, and would you, a Boer, shrink from assisting your own people ? What is true of a nation is also true of a single individual. All depends on the attitude you are taking up.

Consider the matter and come to ——. There we will address you on the date mentioned, and acquaint you with our further plans. We pray you by the freedom of your own people do not neglect your most sacred duty, but come forward and be prepared to accompany us through the ready co-operation of our Government, for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. We are able to provide you with all requirements such as horses, saddles, bridles, etc.

Your sincere friends,

(*Signed*) ANDRIES AND PIETER DE WET.

This precious effusion, signed by two Boers who had taken up their residence in German South-West, was extensively circulated by natives in north-western Cape Colony, and afforded the first concrete evidence to the public that German influence was behind the unrest, and that Germans were prepared to finance the movement and provide arms and ammunition.

From this time onwards the idea of rebellion seemed to take definite shape in the public mind, and Loyalists began to regard it as an ugly possibility to be faced. Be it remembered that the abortive rising at Lichtenburg, and the traitorous doings at Potchefstroom were as yet a profound secret to 99 per cent. of the public. The public, in fact, had nothing definite to go upon; but the mysterious

A TELL-TALE WAISTCOAT FOUND ON A REBEL WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE A NON-COMBATANT.

VOLUNTEER CALL.

There was a splendid response to the Government's call for volunteers to form [illegible]

LOYAL BURGHERS ASSEMBLING AT PRETORIA RACECOURSE.

comings and goings of certain suspected people in Pretoria and hints of what would happen "when Pretoria was taken" roused the Loyalists to a pitch of exasperation that frequently found vent in hard words and harder blows. The taunts of the rebelliously inclined always were: "What can you Britishers do? You haven't any rifles, and we have got thousands, and can get thousands more."

Of course, the Government knew more than the public, and that knowledge led them to ask for 7,000 volunteers for immediate enlistment. The response was excellent, and, in addition, Civilian Training (Voluntary) Associations were formed in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and soon there were some 12,000 men between thirty and fifty years of age being drilled by ex-army instructors. As the majority of these men had seen service, and most of them were experienced shots, they very quickly became a factor not to be despised. In any event, drilling provided some outlet for the pent-up feelings of the British and loyal Dutch element who were too old or otherwise unable to volunteer for active service in German South-West. Later on they became of considerable use to the authorities; but that time was not yet.

The matter that was giving the Government anxiety at this period was the scarcely concealed truculence of Maritz. On September 23 he had been asked by the Minister of Defence if he could move a strong force from Kakamas to Schuit Drift on the Orange River and co-operate with General Lukin by supporting Colonel Grant in his advance upon Warmbad. His reply was, to say the least of it, insolent,

and he wound up an offensive letter with the assertion that neither he nor his men would cross the frontier and attack the Germans.

The result of his refusal to move was that Grant met with disaster. Major B. Enslin was promptly sent from Pretoria to find out what was happening at Upington. He arrived on the day after Grant had been cut up (the 27th), and found Maritz in the same truculent mood and the men under him openly talking sedition. He wired to General Smuts that matters were serious, and that a commando of 2,000 trusted and experienced men were required.

General Smuts immediately wired to Maritz to hand over his command to Major Enslin and proceed to Pretoria, and at the same time instructed Major Enslin what to do in case of attack by the 3,000 Germans reported to be in the vicinity. Maritz replied to General Smuts, declining to leave, and, what was more suspicious, refused to show Major Enslin (who was there as his Chief of Staff) any papers or tell him anything as to the movements or the disposition of his own forces. All he would say was that Botha and Smuts were " traitors " to their country and that he would not go to German South-West. " *The only real leader of the people was General Hertzog.*" Through a third party, however, Maritz's real sentiments were discovered, and he disclosed to one of his supposed sympathizers that he had been in communication with the Germans—he actually showed the letters—and that it was entirely due to his personal influence with them that they had not already invaded the Union in force. Major Enslin

promptly wired to the Minister that Maritz was playing a double game, and that he (Enslin) was afraid to trust anyone in camp.

It was while this delicate situation was secretly developing, and rumours were flying through the country districts like wild-fire, that General Botha exercised a steadying influence by a speech he delivered to a huge gathering of Boers at Bank (a small place to the west of Krugersdorp). In the course of a notable speech he said:

Germany was looking for a place where to send its over-population, and this country of South Africa seemed to the German people to look like a fat lamb to be killed. German agents, with their seditious talk, were already doing a great deal of harm in South Africa; but the German tortoise had for once stuck its head too far out of its shell, and was in grave danger of being trod on. "I have information in my possession regarding Germany's ambitions concerning South Africa which would make people's hair stand on end. . . .

"In the past the people of South Africa said to the British Government, 'Trust us, and we will prove ourselves worthy of the trust.' Would you now, when for the first time we are called upon to do so, when for the first time we are faced with great troubles, stand aside? To-day we must prove to the British Government, which is watching us, that we are worthy, and more than worthy, of the trust which has been reposed in us, and by doing so we shall create for ourselves a greater future than otherwise would be possible. . . ."

Then he proceeded to smash the "neutrality" argument, pointing out that Britain had determined

to take German South-West. If the Union Government had not offered to carry out the task, the Imperial Government would have sent 50,000 Indian troops or asked the Australians to carry out the campaign, or they might have asked for volunteers in South Africa itself—and they would have got them. "I am proud," he continued, "that the Union Government has been asked to do the work, and the Government, after careful consideration, has decided to follow the path of duty and of honour. . . .

"The one aim of Germany is to get possession of South Africa. . . .

"We want no lip-loyalty and fine-weather patriots. The British Government must be able to look straight into our eyes and be able to see what is in our minds. . . .

"I want to serve my people, and though my time may not be long—my hair is growing grey and my health not too good—I will always continue to do what I think is in the true interests of the nation. In the past we have had a clean and honourable history. Let us continue on those lines."

All this time Beyers had been ostensibly lying low. There is no doubt that the tragic death of Delarey had given him a shock and considerably interfered with his plans; but we now see that it had not greatly interfered with Maritz, and certainly had not interfered with De Wet and certain of the Free State leaders. De Wet tried hard to work up an agitation in Potchefstroom against the Government. He held a public meeting, but it developed into a free fight, in which eggs, potatoes, dead cats, and even fists and sjamboks, played prominent parts. It was like

a miniature battle, and it was adjourned from the hall to the Square, where the fighting was resumed, and many people had to be attended to by doctors. For practically two days the town was in a state of uproar, the British and loyal Dutch bitterly resenting the irruption of De Wet and his commando, who thought that their preponderating numbers would enable them to have matters all their own way. Wherein they sadly miscalculated the temper of the sturdy Potchefstroom folk, who had learned quite enough of the traitorous intentions of September 15 to " get their backs up."

By this time the Government could scarcely have been in doubt that sinister doings were afoot, and this time of a much more determined nature than before. It was freely rumoured in the Free State that a rebellion was in preparation, and that one of the first acts would be to seize the Free State armoury at Tempe Barracks, near Bloemfontein, and thereby obtain possession of a number of guns and quick-firers, also a considerable quantity of rifles and ammunition. But the Government were not to be caught napping. They promptly removed all the arms and ammunition to a much safer place farther north, and transferred all the South African Mounted Riflemen (S.A.M.R.) recruits, then undergoing a course of training at Tempe, to Pretoria. This move, which was carried out with considerable secrecy, had a twofold effect. It upset the calculations of the Free State malcontents and, there is little doubt, put a stop to the plot which we now know to have been brewing in Pretoria—namely, to rush the police

barracks, armoury, and magazine, then release the 2,000 odd prisoners of war then interned at Roberts' Heights, and so hold the capital in the hollow of their hands.

It was a curious feature of this rebellion that the men concerned appear not to have been able to keep their counsel. For instance, this proposed " rushing " of Pretoria was talked of for weeks, but before the parties in the conspiracy could screw their courage up to the sticking-point the Government had neatly countered the move by the drafting of 400 military police recruits—men who could both ride and shoot—by the concentration at strategical points of other units of these fine semi-military regiments (S.A.M.R.), and by the quick removal of all the German prisoners of war from Pretoria to Maritzburg in Natal. This latter move was a bitter surprise for the plotters, and particularly so for some of the prisoners, who appear to have been informed that an effort would be made to release them. Some of these refused point-blank to pack up their belongings and proceed to the railway siding, and it needed some " tickling " with the bayonet before they saw the error of their ways and the uselessness of arguing with cold steel. The transfer of the prisoners was carried out with exceptional secrecy and celerity, and before the news leaked out they were all well on their way to Natal and well outside the danger zone. A number managed to escape on the way down, but that was not a serious matter.

To return to Maritz. On September 30 he received a second telegram from General Smuts ordering him

to proceed to Pretoria, but it elicited another semi-insolent message, and referred the Minister to his message of the 25th, in which he had refused to cross the frontier.

Meantime Colonel "Coen" Brits had been appointed in command of all the Union forces concentrating upon Upington, and with instructions, should he consider it necessary, to arrest Maritz if he would not resign and quit peaceably. All that Maritz knew was that a big force was on the way, this information having come to his ears through his spies. He grew nervous, and decided that it was time for him to get out. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the day he received General Smuts' second telegram he broke up his camp at Upington, and marched away with practically all his force and all available ammunition. Major Enslin asked him what he was moving for, and was laconically informed that "he was carrying out his instructions." He asked Major Enslin to accompany him, but the Major smelt a rat, and excused himself on the ground that he had to see to the forwarding of equipment and stores.

It was a good thing for him that he did not go, as subsequent events will show. From that moment Maritz can be said to have gone into rebellion. He marched in the direction of the German border, and two days later arrived at Van Rooisvlei, about twenty-five miles west of Upington, where he camped and sent for the other detachment, then lying at Kakamas, with instructions to join him. On October 5 or 6 a motor-car, for which Maritz had been waiting, arrived, and he and Captain Joubert went off in it,

ostensibly to look for water in the direction of Cydnas, but secretly they got a refill of petrol and rushed towards the German border. (This Captain Joubert is the same individual who had come as emissary from Maritz to Beyers. He had been living in German South-West for years, where he owned a farm and a large number of stock. He was an old friend of Maritz, who " worked the oracle " and got him a captaincy in the Union Defence Force with quite remarkable rapidity.)

They returned from their trip to the Germans on October 7, and the word was passed among the faithful that they were not to fight the Germans but the British. Two days later (on the 9th) Maritz convened a full parade, and cleverly arranged matters through his officers so that the machine-gun section should be completely surrounded. At a prearranged signal the supporters of Maritz made a move to seize and disarm the gun section. Some of the latter showed fight and tried to get to their guns, but Maritz and some of the instructors closed in on them from behind, and they were marched down to a spot where a meeting was to be held. Let us quote the sworn affidavit of Corporal Van der Merwe with regard to what followed:

" Maritz then got on a box and addressed us. He started abusing Botha, Smuts, and the capitalists, and said we were being kept under by them. He said that he did not want the land ruled by Englishmen, niggers, and Jews. He said that if ever there was a good time to take back South Africa now was the opportunity, because circumstances now rendered

it impossible for England to land any men in South Africa. He said that Botha had sent us up to the line for training, and pointed out how badly the men who had been sent to Lüderitzbucht had been treated, and how unnecessary it was for us to be sent into German South-West Africa to be killed. He said that there was a wireless station up north in German South-West Africa, and that they were in direct communication with Europe, and that he had information from there that the Allies were hopelessly beaten, and that there was now a good chance of getting back the old flag over South Africa, which, by hook or crook, would be planted on Table Mountain. He then read a wire from General Smuts which ordered us into German South-West Africa, and said that if we obeyed that wire we would have to face the same music as those at Lüderitzbucht. He then read us a contract which we had with the Germans 'that if the Germans assisted in the forming of a Republic of South Africa the boundary-line would be in future in the centre of the river instead of on the north bank as at present, and in consideration of this the Germans would allow us to retain Walfisch Bay and the islands in the vicinity, and would also give us Delagoa Bay.' He then said that those who were unwilling to follow him should step out, and Lieutenant Rossouw and some forty or fifty men, including the whole gun section, stepped out. They were disarmed and placed under guard, and Maritz said that he was going to send them away as prisoners of war. I was on the point of stepping out when I heard that they were to be made prisoners of war, so I retained my place in the ranks, determined to effect my escape at the first opportunity. . . . Lieutenant Botes personally informed me that he had been working in this matter for the past six months, and the day after Maritz addressed us

Sergeant-Instructor Hattingh said to me at Bokzijnputs, 'This is quite an old thing; I knew about it for a long time.' On the day that we left Brandvlei for Kakamas I was singing 'Sons of the Sea,' when Instructor Hattingh said in a half-jocular manner, 'You must not sing that; you must sing the "Volkslied" instead.' "*

One of those present declares that Maritz was greatly affected towards the close of his speech, and when referring to his wife and two little children, whom he dearly loved, he broke into tears.

However, that did not affect the business of the rebellion. Instructor Englebrecht proposed that Maritz should be their Commanding Officer, to lead them where he would. This was agreed to. Englebrecht addressed the men, also one Captain Boshoff, a Union journalist (Dutch), who had come to the conclusion that the sword was mightier than the pen.

Let us now return to Colonel Brits, who had been sent to take Maritz severely in hand. When he got to Upington he found that the bird had flown, but as there was no proof of mutiny he had to go warily. So he sent a message to the Minister of Defence suggesting that he despatch a wire to Maritz instructing him to return to Upington and report to Brits. This was done, and at the same time Colonel Brits sent forward a wire to Maritz telling him that he (Brits) had been appointed to take command and instructing him to come to Upington.

* Two months later, after De Wet had been captured, Beyers drowned, and the rebellion crushed, Maritz issued a proclamation setting forth his reasons why the people should go into rebellion. It is a belated document, and for that reason is placed in the Appendix (A).

Maritz replied that he had no objection to hand over his commando, but he certainly was not going to report to anybody. All he wanted was his discharge, and if Brits brought the discharge with him he could take over the commando as it stood.

Colonel Brits did not go himself, but sent over Major Bouwer to Van Rooisvlei, where Maritz promptly made him prisoner, also his companions. At that time Maritz had hoisted the Vierkleur, and had sent away towards the border those who would not go into rebellion with him. Major Bouwer subsequently was released, and was sent back to Colonel Brits with an ultimatum to the Government that unless they would give Maritz a guarantee, before ten o'clock the following morning, permitting Hertzog, De Wet, Beyers, Kemp, and Muller to meet him at his headquarters in order to get their instructions, he would attack Upington, Kakamas, and other places in the Union.

Maritz satisfied Major Bouwer that he had howitzers, pompoms, and other weapons supplied by the Germans and held the rank of a General commanding the German troops. There were a number of Germans with him. He boasted that he had been supplied by the Germans with plenty of arms, ammunition, and money. He showed Major Bouwer numerous telegrams and helio messages from the Germans dating back to the beginning of September. He also showed him a copy of a treaty entered into between Maritz and the German authorities, guaranteeing the independence of the Union as a Republic and other things. The document is as follows:

Treaty.

Agreement made and entered into by and between the Imperial Government of German South-West Africa, as representative of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Germany, and General S. G. Maritz, who is acting in the name and behalf of a number of officers and men who are prepared to declare the independence of South Africa—that is to say:

1. The said General S. G. Maritz has declared the independence of South Africa and commenced war against England.

2. The Governor of German South-West Africa acknowledges all African Forces which operate against England as belligerent forces, and they will, after further discussion, support the war against England.

3. In the event of British South Africa being declared independent, either partially or as a whole, the Imperial Governor of German South-West Africa will take all possible measures to get the State or those States acknowledged as such by the German Empire as soon as possible, and bring them under the terms of the general conclusion of peace.

4. In consideration of such assistance the newly formed State or States will have no objection to the German Government taking possession of Walfisch Bay and the islands opposite German South-West Africa.

5. The centre of the Orange River will in future form the boundaries between German South-West Africa and the Cape Province.

6. The German Empire will have no objection to the above-named States taking possession of Delagoa Bay.

7. If the rebellion fails, the rebels who enter German territory will be recognized as German subjects, and be treated as such.

The Union Government issued a brief statement setting forth what had happened in connection with Maritz, and concluded with the following announcement:

"In view of this state of affairs the Government is taking most vigorous steps to stamp out the rebellion and inflict condign punishment on all rebels and traitors."

Meantime Colonel Brits promptly moved out against Maritz, and though he had a much smaller force, fought a very smart action against a portion of the rebel force at Rateldraat, some twenty miles south of Upington, and took eighty prisoners.

Several months later one of the captured Loyalists, Quartermaster-Sergeant Margolius, was released, and he added many interesting details to the necessarily bald statement of the Government. He says there must have been about 500 men at Kakamas Camp under the command of Maritz. In this camp there were five English lads and five young Jews. The force was kept in active training and undergoing preparation for what they believed was to be an invasion of German South-West. Then a patrol of about 150 were sent off by Maritz to an unknown destination. Next day about 350 left in the same aimless fashion (Quartermaster-Sergeant Margolius being of this party), and they trekked off to the village of Kakamas. Just outside the town a burgher rode out and met them, and told them that Maritz had declared himself in rebellion against the Botha Government and he wanted as many followers as he could get. There were immediately shouts all

through the force: "If we find him we will shoot him." "Where is he?" The reply was that he had gone off to Keimoes.

They all went on to Keimoes, and on arrival were surprised to find 120 German soldiers there, with the German flag flying and the old Transvaal Republican flag, the Vierkleur, by its side. Margolius, with others of the troop, asked if the Germans were prisoners? To their surprise they were told that the Germans had come down to support Maritz.

This naturally created considerable sensation among the men, and there was a heated discussion, some declaring for him, while others said they would not do so, among these being Margolius and the five English and five Jewish lads. At this moment Maritz came on the scene and ordered a full parade in open square. He then addressed them, telling them that the Botha Government was weak and unable to supply the men with the rifles and ammunition they needed. But he turned boastfully to the smiling Germans standing around him and said: "See how strong our friends the Germans are. I am for the Germans," he declared, "and I call upon all of you who do not wish to go with me to step aside."

A German officer then read a speech from a sheet of paper, in which he said that Germany only wanted the boundary-line extended to the middle of the Orange River, also they desired Walfisch Bay, which had already been promised them by Maritz.

Most of the troop cheered the speeches and remained in their places, but the ten already referred to stepped out. Their rifles were taken away from

them, also their bandoliers, and they were placed on parole.

For a week the rebels and Germans gave themselves up to looting, euphemistically termed "commandeering," for they never paid for anything except with "receipts," as the notes were called, for Maritz carefully kept all the Union cash that was in his possession for the purpose of paying his men. The criminal waste of stores that went on—sugar, flour, and other food-stuffs being spilled all over the place—was so scandalous that Captain Boshoff of the rebels actually placed Margolius and his ten companions who remained loyal on guard over the store, and gave them a rifle and five cartridges apiece with instructions to shoot any looters, whether rebels or Germans! They afterwards saw some Germans seizing goods, and would have carried out their instructions without hesitation, but were restrained by a rebel lieutenant, who feared trouble if any Germans were shot down. But it is a decidedly illuminating illustration of the fact that the rebels placed more faith in the integrity of these obstinate English and Jewish "prisoners" than they did in their own men.

Later on some fifty more of the Defence Force declined to serve in the rebel ranks, and were sent to Windhuk as prisoners of war.

The experiences related above by Margolius have been confirmed by Mr. Albert Millin, a young attorney of Springbok, Namaqualand, who was one of the ten who stood firm. He states that it was due to one of the rebels, Captain Beukes, that these ten were not sent to Windhuk—as were others of Maritz's men

who had refused to join him—but were retained on parole, without arms, with Maritz's column. Mr. Millin describes the exciting times they had after the repulse of Maritz by Colonel Brits at Keimoes, and the disorderly flight that ensued. The little loyal party tried to take advantage of the confusion and the stormy night to escape, but, unfortunately, they fell again into the hands of the rebels, and, much to their disgust, were taken to Schuit's Drift, and from there to Jerusalem (about fifteen miles over the German border), where they were kept for two and a half months. Maritz continually changed his mind as to what to do with them, but finally took them with him back to Schuit's Drift, where Maritz's force was heavily defeated by the Union troops, and on the following day the Loyalists were released and given two donkeys, a small cart, and eight days' rations. They walked for forty miles through the desert without the faintest idea of where they were going or what place they ought to make for, when they were picked up by Major Naude's scouts, and by them were sent on in safety till they had passed through the wilderness and arrived at O'Okiep, looking like Rip Van Winkles, with long hair and matted beards.

Another interesting incident in connection with this treachery of Maritz was the escape of Captain Quinlan, the Government Veterinary Surgeon of the Experimental Farm at Potchefstroom, who was at Kakamas with Maritz's force. Upon learning of his traitorous action, Captain Quinlan decided to make a dash with as many horses as he could get away.

He had been suspicious of Maritz for some time, in view of the way the Government was being robbed wholesale by the purchase of "rotten" horses, and of the fact that unarmed patrols were being sent out when there were Germans within a few hours of the camp. The night it was definitely known that Maritz had acted a traitor's part and the loyal men made prisoners (they were informed of the fact by Major Enslin, who was at Upington), Captain Quinlan resolved to escape in company with one of his veterinary dressers, Sergeant Elliott, while Lieutenant Thwaites, Transport Officer, upon being informed of the plan, decided to make the third. The three got away with about 100 of the best horses, travelling as hard as they could go for 120 miles over terrible desert country to Draghoender. On their way down they fell in with Captain Jenner, who was in charge of the 4th Brigade train, and who, by an equally magnificent piece of work, had succeeded in getting away with a convoy of eleven waggons containing supplies.

The refugees joined up their little forces, and only just in time, for the rebels were out for them, particularly for the convoy. The whole loyal force numbered less than forty men all told, and for three hours they fought an overwhelming number of rebels, and with success, losing only one man and three waggons. The rebels retired after receiving considerable punishment, and the convoy got safely away. The three men with the horses then pushed on, and finally the desert was safely crossed with the loss of only nine horses. Considering the awful

sandy, waterless country that had to be covered, this is certainly a feat that deserves mention.

A few words with reference to Maritz are necessary here. Not only then, but later, he appeared to resent the suggestion that Beyers was the organizer of the rebellion; Maritz claimed all the credit for himself. He had made many friends among the Germans while he was carrying out a difficult transport service during the Herero rebellion. He states that it was while he was undergoing training as a Union Defence Force officer in the Military School at Bloemfontein that he first conceived the idea of "liberating" South Africa. He became a politician as well as a soldier, and was reported to be a strong supporter of the Hertzog party in the North-Western District of Cape Colony (No. 12 district), to which he had been appointed very reluctantly by the Minister of Defence, and then only on the repeated strong recommendation of General Beyers. Why was Beyers so anxious to have Maritz in charge of the district adjoining German South-West? Perhaps it is explained by Maritz's assertion that Beyers did not initiate the bad business, but that he (Maritz) "put him on to it."

Be that as it may, there are two independent witnesses who assert that Maritz had made arrangements with the Germans *before* he was appointed to the command of the North-Western District. Did Beyers know anything about it? Did that account for his anxiety that Maritz should have that particular post?

At any rate, from the very moment war was declared Maritz was in constant communication with

the German authorities in German South-West, and this correspondence he has since shown quite freely to certain Union officers. He claims that he was in close and constant touch with De Wet, Beyers, Hertzog, and Kemp for two or three years "in connection with the movement." He stated this in his address to his troops at Van Rooisvlei (*vide* affidavit by Captain A. S. Louw).

It was this cheery gentleman (Maritz) who, after six weeks' constant communication with the German authorities, telegraphed to Beyers, on September 10, urging him personally as Commander-in-Chief to pay a personal visit to the two Union Force camps at Upington and Kakamas. "Everything still quiet and in good order," he added!

CHAPTER VI

Martial Law declared—Attitude of the Dutch Reformed Church—Sedition and sedition-mongers—Botha and Hertzog—Exchange of telegrams—"What do you propose further?"—Rebel meeting at Koppies—Botha hints at civil war—Confirmation: De Wet and Beyers turn rebels—Government Proclamation—Maritz's advance upon Pretoria—Defeated and driven back—Pretoria threatened on three sides—Botha smashes Beyers—Lichtenburg rebels routed.

Events now marched with dramatic rapidity. The Government promptly declared martial law throughout the Union in the following terms:

(No. 219, 1914.)

By His Excellency the Right Honourable Viscount Buxton, a member of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and St. George, High Commissioner for South Africa, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Union of South Africa.

Whereas a state of war exists between the British Empire on the one hand and the German Empire on the other;

And whereas the Government of the Protectorate of German South-West Africa has, through a widespread secret propaganda, persistently endeavoured to seduce the citizens of the Union and the officers and members of the Defence Forces of the Union from their allegiance, and to cause rebellion and civil war within the Union;

And whereas these efforts have so far succeeded that Lieutenant-Colonel Solomon Gerhardus Maritz, together with a number of his officers and a portion of the forces placed under his command, has shamefully and traitorously gone over to the enemy, and is now in open rebellion against the Government and the people of the Union, and is in conjunction with the forces of the enemy invading the Northern portions of the Province of the Cape of Good Hope;

And whereas there is grave reason to think that the Government of the Protectorate of German South-West Africa had through its numerous spies and agents communicated with and corrupted also other citizens of the Union under the false and treacherous pretext of favouring the establishment of a republic in South Africa;

And whereas the Government of the Union consider it necessary to take effective measures to protect and defend the interests of the Union and of its loyal and law-abiding citizens against these treacherous attacks from within and without, and to that end declare Martial Law;

Now, therefore, under and by virtue of the power and authority in me invested, I do hereby declare, proclaim, and make known that all Magisterial Districts in the Union of South Africa are, until further notice, placed under Martial Law, as Martial Law is understood and administered in time of war;

And I do hereby call upon all persons in the Union of South Africa to give due obedience to any and all regulations issued pursuant to this Proclamation by notice in the *Gazette* under the hand of the Minister of State for Defence, or to orders and instructions, not being in conflict with the said regulations, given by the senior military officer in command for the time being in any part of the Union of South Africa.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the Union of South Africa at Pretoria this twelfth day of October, One thousand Nine hundred and Fourteen.

BUXTON,
Governor-General.

By command of His Excellency the Governor-General-in-Council.

J. C. SMUTS.

The Premier next issued in Zulu, Xosa, and Sesuto languages a proclamation enjoining upon the natives the necessity of being well-behaved and submitting to the inconveniences of martial law. He also thanked them for their loyal messages and offers of assistance.

From all parts of South Africa shoals of resolutions of support poured in upon the Government. There is no necessity to reproduce these, but in view of the fact that certain predikants of the Dutch Reformed Church were then playing, and afterwards played, a still more prominent part in the movement, the following open letter from the Moderator and other leaders of that body deserves to be placed on record, if only to show the attitude officially taken up by the Dutch Reformed Church. This is all the more important in view of the fact that those who subsequently became rebel leaders were religious men and professed to be animated by religious ideals. The letter is as follows:

DEAR BRETHREN,

As we are convinced that you realize as we do the gravity of the position in which we are now placed in consequence of the dreadful war now raging in Europe, and into which our Fatherland

has been drawn, we take the liberty to address the following letter to you, trusting you will do whatever lies in your power to save a portion of our people from a most dangerous and rash undertaking which may plunge our Fatherland in the greatest misery and wretchedness, and which threatens our people with certain destruction. From public speeches and from other sources it is clear that there are persons who hold that the time has come to make South Africa independent of the British Empire, and who would make use of a war in which the Empire is engaged to make an attempt which will cause a bloody civil war in our country, and which can only terminate in the destruction of those who take part therein. It is needless to point out that such an undertaking would be a faithless breach of a treaty signed at Vereeniging and a positive sin against God, Whose guiding hand we recognize in everything, as also in this place of our history, or to remind you of the incalculable calamities which are likely to result not only to the guilty, but to all our people, who assuredly will have to pay the penalty of the crime committed by a portion thereof.

We, therefore, pray you will, wherever necessary, use all your influence to oppose this unhappy movement by cautiously and calmly pointing out their error to those who are in danger of being drawn in, and to warn them against the danger to which they expose themselves and others; and especially also to avoid each word and deed calculated to excite a spirit of dissatisfaction in these days of unrest and tension. At such a time a single spark is sufficient to cause a conflagration. A child can start a fire, but who can say what the extent of the destruction will be? This also applies to the agitation against the resolution of the highest legislative bodies in regard to the expedition to the German territory.

Though many of our people greatly regret that resolution, now that it is once passed it does not lie in our power to have it annulled. We can only create or foster a spirit of bitterness, of unrest, and of discord by heedless expressions at a time when it is especially necessary to allay the feelings and to encourage our people to trust entirely to our Heavenly Father, without Whom no sparrow falls to the ground.

As sons of our country who have at heart whatever touches our National interests, we must inevitably form our own opinion regarding the great questions of the day. As citizens of the State we have a perfect right to do so; but we as Ministers of the Gospel should guard against being drawn into party politics, whereby we incur the danger of bringing into contempt the dignity of our holy office, and to render powerless, to some extent at least, the Gospel of salvation entrusted to us. Our place is not in the midst of the strife, but on the mountain-top with Moses, Aaron, and Hur, where we lift up holy hands without anger or discord, to plead with the God of our fathers for our country. We will thus serve our people better than to act as party leaders, for which others are at least equally as competent as we are. There is always the danger of our identifying the welfare of the country with the triumph of our own ideas, and of our confusing our personal conception of the truth with the truth itself. May the Lord grant us all grace in these troublous times to abide in the secrecy of His Tent. May He have mercy on our beloved country.

A. I. Steytler, J. I. Marais, P. J. G. de Vos, C. F. P. Muller, A. Moorees, W. A. Joubert, B. P. J. Marchand, D. S. Botha, J. P. van Heerden, S. G. Malan, P. G. J. Meiring.

Capetown,
October 13, 1914.

RESOLUTION.

This meeting professes its profound indignation at the treacherous conduct of Lieutenant-Colonel Maritz. It views his action as a base violation of faith which is calculated to place our people in a bad light, and which will have the most fatal consequences. The meeting, therefore, desires to impress on all members of the Church to act according to the spirit of the above open letter, and to support the Government in all possible ways to maintain law and order.

Military preparations on a huge scale were hastened. General Botha appointed his Staff, and announced his intention of leaving for the front the following week and attacking the traitor Maritz. The Loyalists went through a worrying time those days, not knowing who was to be trusted and whom to suspect. Rumours were flying round, thick as locusts, concerning potential rebels, followed by angry protests and threats of legal proceedings. General Botha and the Government received visits and protests from a considerable number of individuals who soon afterwards proved themselves to be rebels. There were others who went about preaching sedition, openly as well as covertly.

"Sedition" is a very elastic term, especially in time of martial law, as many a loose-lipped person found to his cost. For instance, it was sedition to "in any way resist, incite disaffection, or disregard the authority of the Government of the Union of South Africa or any persons acting under and in pursuance of the Government's authority." Offences

were further defined as using language or doing acts or publishing matter calculated or tending

(*a*) To subvert the authority of the Government and Parliament of the Union.

(*b*) To create and foster opposition to the policy of carrying out hostilities against the enemy or the measures taken by the Government in furtherance of that policy.

(*c*) To bring into discredit or disrepute the Governor or the Ministers of the Union, or the officers, officials, and forces of the Union acting under the authority of the Union Government.

(*d*) To express sympathy with or to excite sympathy for the enemy or persons in armed rebellion against the Union.

What was happening in the Free State at this time? There were sinister rumours afloat, and the public was particularly anxious to see some repudiation from the individuals mentioned by Maritz of their implied complicity in the rebellion plot. The silence was broken by General Hertzog, who telegraphed to General Botha:

From Hertzog, Bloemfontein, to General Botha, Prime Minister, Pretoria.

"The following telegram has just been received by me from —— at ——: 'Representations are being made to the Government to end the Maritz rebellion without bloodshed. Please come forward with your co-operation for the furtherance of this purpose.' If I can be of any service in effecting the result aimed at in the telegram, I place my services at the disposal of the Government."

General Botha (centre), Col. Collyer, Chief of Staff (right), and Col. Truter, Commissioner of Police (left).

To this General Botha replied as follows:

From General Botha to General Hertzog, Bloemfontein.

"C—— of —— telegraphed to me about the same matter. I replied to him—for nobody regrets the treacherous acts of the traitors more than I, especially in view of the fact that a number of inexperienced men were scandalously misled—in this way: 'There are no negotiations with the rebel leader. The rebellion can only be suppressed by force.' I deeply sympathize with the parents. Much depends upon the influence which they will bring to bear. The general opinion is that an immediate public repudiation of Maritz's action by you and the other members mentioned in his ultimatum will do much towards reaching the results aimed at. What do you propose further?"*

This interesting little epistolary duel stopped just as it was in danger of becoming peculiarly interesting. Apparently Hertzog did not reply; but a few days later he was in Pretoria in long and earnest conference with big legal luminaries, with a view, it is said, of taking legal action against General Botha for the implication alleged to be contained in the telegram. Many months have passed, and nothing has been heard of the proposed action.

As might be expected, the action of Maritz in turning rebel had considerable influence in the Free State and the Transvaal, and a meeting of burghers was secretly convened to be held at Koppies on

* Correspondence on similar lines between President Steyn and General Botha appears in Appendix B at the end of this volume.

October 13. This meeting is an important link in the chain that connects the preliminaries with the actual rebellious acts. It was held in the dining-room of the parsonage of the Rev. Mr. Ferreira. Among those present were General De Wet, the Rev. Mr. Ferreira, H. Serfontein, M.L.A., N. W. Serfontein, M.L.A., J. Brand Wessels, M.L.A., Rocco De Villiers, Commandant Meyers of Koppies, P. T. Furstenburg, M.P.C.—all from the Free State. The Transvaal men were Kemp, Pienaar, Bezuidenhout, Jan Botha, Bodenstein, Piet Grobler, M.L.A., Rev. Mr. Vorster, Rev. Van Broekhuisen, and General Liebenberg.

After prayer by the Rev. Mr. Ferreira, General De Wet, who had been elected to the chair, went straight to the point. He pointed out that they must act at once; matters already had been too long delayed by the death of General Delarey; and they must not lose another day now that martial law had been proclaimed. Maritz had started fighting, and though they themselves had neither money nor arms, Maritz had plenty of both. They must start here, however, and then go to him.

This language came as a surprise to General Liebenberg, who, while sympathetic with regard to a protest against invading German South-West, had no idea that rebellion was contemplated, and he promptly asked, Where was Hertzog ?

De Wet replied: " Well, you all know that Hertzog is no warrior, but is a lawyer. I saw him yesterday. He is a man you can trust in the dark. He is in his proper place. We must have a man to fight for us

in the political sphere. Hertzog is the man to do that. Don't ask me where Hertzog is." He also added that Hertzog had stated that he would not attend the meeting, as he had already been made the scapegoat. " Hertzog was, however, to be found when wanted."

Liebenberg then asked where Beyers was, and Pienaar replied that he could not attend the meeting, as the tyres of his car had been slashed at the meeting at the Pretoria Opera House on the 10th. Liebenberg held that that was no sufficient excuse for absence, stoutly declined to have anything to do with a rebellion, and proposed that they appoint a deputation to wait upon General Botha. This was strongly opposed by De Wet, Kemp, and others, but finally was agreed to as the only way of dealing with Liebenberg.

The deputation, accompanied by De Wet, left that afternoon for Pretoria (after De Wet had advised patience to about 200 armed adherents who had been awaiting the result of the conference), and were met there by the Rev. Van Broekhuisen, who drove them to an hotel and promised to bring Beyers with him the following morning without fail. But when morning came Van Broekhuisen came alone, and his excuse was that " they had to hide Beyers." Furthermore, he (Van Broekhuisen) did not intend to go with them. This caused considerable dissatisfaction, and one of the members observed, with emphasis, that it was a poor lookout if Beyers took to hiding already.

Anyway, the deputation waited upon General

Botha, and talked with him for four and a quarter hours without stopping. What they wanted the deputation apparently did not know themselves, for certainly General Botha was not able to make head or tail out of them. As a matter of fact, they were merely wasting time, for they had only agreed to the deputation in order not to divulge their plans to Liebenberg. While they wasted Botha's and their own time, De Wet and Beyers had been brought together by Rev. Van Broekhuisen, and the two arch-conspirators had a long conference together, arranging their final plans while General Botha was being hoodwinked by a pseudo-deputation with a lot of windy grievances!

They certainly made one point clear: they put in a sort of ultimatum to the effect that he must either stop the contemplated invasion of German South-West or resign.

General Botha told them tersely that he had no intention of stopping the contemplated invasion, and he certainly had no intention whatever of resigning; and with that the deputation had to be content. But is it any wonder that the Premier said to one of the deputation despairingly as they left the room: "What do these people want?"

What Beyers and De Wet had decided to do may be judged from the fact that on his way back to the Free State De Wet sent off two telegrams, one to Commandant Meyer of Kroonstad, and the other to Commandant Meyer of Koppies, both in identical terms: "Resign immediately."

For the moment we will leave De Wet and his

fellow-conspirators in the Free State, and confine our attention to happenings in the Transvaal.

There was a comparative lull for two or three days, broken only by the calling up for active service of five of the rifle regiments—four mounted and one dismounted—and as the districts from which they were drawn were known to be favourable to General Botha the incident gave intelligent people something to think about. Nor was their anxiety allayed when, on October 20, on the occasion of the presentation of a silken banner by the women of the Transvaal to General Botha, he spoke in grave terms. He warned them that other clouds than those in German South-West were hanging over their heads, and said he would give every drop of blood he possessed to prevent further bloodshed and to remove this cloud, which was darker than people thought; and he besought every one to pray to prevent the possibility of civil war.

To say that this phrase sent a thrill throughout South Africa is to apply the mildest description, for while the prospect of war against a common enemy at their gates caused no perturbation—the people of South Africa are getting accustomed to experiences of a thrilling nature—they were alarmed at the horrible prospect of civil war. Civil war, with all its dreadful concomitants—father against son, brother against brother, friend against friend!

From that moment the barriers of suspicion were raised and everyone was suspected. It was a trying time, particularly in Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Potchefstroom, for it was realized that in one or all

of these towns the dramatic move would be made. In Pretoria there was enough secret talk and mysterious whispers to justify the most sinister rumours. No one could be blind to the fact that attempts were being made to undermine the allegiance of the civil service by warnings (from within the service as well as from without) of what would happen to them when the republican flag was hoisted, and the promise of retaining their salary and position if they were "true patriots."

All doubts were set at rest late on the night of Sunday, October 25, when the Government issued the following official communiqué:

"The Government have to announce with deep regret that, at the instigation of certain prominent individuals, a number of burghers in the Northern districts of the Transvaal have been misguided enough to defy the authority of the Government of the Union of South Africa, and to make preparation for armed resistance and rebellion.

"The Government, although they have been for some days aware of these rebellious preparations, and have been taking steps to deal with the situation that has arisen, have spared no effort to preserve the peace without bloodshed.

"Now, however, the Government learn that in the Northern Orange Free State burghers and military requirements are being commandeered under the authority of General Christian De Wet, and in the Western Transvaal under the authority of General Beyers. Armed rebellious commandoes are already in existence, and the town of Heilbron has been seized, and the officials of the Government therein made prisoners. A train has been stopped at Reitz,

and armed citizens of the Defence Force taken therefrom and disarmed.

"Under these circumstances the duty of the Government is clear. They are determined to deal with the matter with a firm hand, and are taking all the necessary steps to that end.

"The very great majority of citizens in every province of the Union are thoroughly loyal, and detest the very idea of rebellion. When they are aware of the situation they will undoubtedly give the Government every assistance in restoring order, and will be careful to abstain from giving the rebellion movement any encouragement or support.

"All loyal citizens of the Union must, therefore, be specially on the alert, and prepared to give the Government all information, and, when called upon to do so, every assistance in their power.

"Citizens who have been, from some reason or other, guilty of disobedience under the Defence Act, need not fear any action against them on that account on the part of the Government so long as they remain quietly at home, and abstain from acts of violence or hostility against the authority of the Government of the Union."

So, after all his passionate protests, Beyers, the ex-Commandant-General of the Union forces, who had worn his country's uniform, been in her most secret military councils, had thrown off the mask at last; though whether moved thereto by his undying hatred of the British or won over by German promises who can say? The public very quickly decided in their own minds that he had been bought with German gold, and their execrations were deep and bitter, with promise of the sternest reprisals. It simply meant this—that Beyers would now, if he

had not already done so, impart to the Germans the whole of the Union plans for the expedition against the South-West, and in these circumstances the whole plan of campaign was useless. Not only so, but encouragement and material aid would be given to the Germans to march on the Union. Viewed in whatever light one pleases, it was a serious position for the people of South Africa to find themselves in, especially when rumours began to fly like wildfire that Maritz, with the German army, was already on his way across the desert, marching due east to Pretoria *viâ* Kuruman.

The rumour was true in a sense. Maritz certainly, with the men who turned traitors with him, supported by a strong German contingent with artillery and machine-guns, moved out from German South-West and attacked Keimoes. There were only 150 men there, under Captain Van Rooyen; but they held up the enemy in most gallant fashion until reinforcements arrived in the form of 200 of the Natal Light Horse, under Major Watt, and 200 of the Imperial Light Horse, under Major Panchaud of Johannesburg. There was a pretty engagement—550 Union Loyalists against 1,000 Germans and German Boers supported by artillery and machine-guns. The enemy was thoroughly defeated and driven from the field, among the prisoners being four officers, including a real live German Count, Count Von Schwierin. This was the second time Colonel Brits had made things unpleasant for the rebels, and we shall hear of him again. For the moment it is sufficient to say that the great advance upon Pretoria had been checked.

A similar mixed force of Maritz's rebels, supported by Germans, who tried to advance in a south-westerly direction, fared no better, for Colonel Van Deventer intercepted them near Calvinia and soundly drubbed them, taking many prisoners, including several German officers. This was a nasty blow for the enemy, but worse was to come, for Colonel Brits followed up Maritz, and two days later (October 24) attacked him, drove him from Kakamas in disorder, and forced him back to the frontier at Schuit's Drift on the Orange River. The Union forces took much booty, not the least valuable being the information that Maritz had been shot through the leg in the previous fight and was suffering intense pain.

As a matter of fact, this put an effective stop for over two months to the belligerent career of Maritz, and he was not able to interfere again so far as the rebellion was concerned, while the warm reception accorded the Germans by the fighting Colonials put a damper upon their martial ardour, and, although they gave trouble for some time in a desultory fashion, they did not again apparently start out with any inflated idea of conquering the Union, at any rate while the rebellion continued. Colonel Brits smartly rattled them on one or two occasions, and then they rested.

Meantime the trouble nearer home—in fact, at home—had grown acute. The rebels were well "up" in the Free State, and it was known that Pretoria was threatened on three sides by several commandoes, who had expressed their determination to seize the capital and control the Government.

The Government acted with commendable promptitude. Pretoria was put into practically a state of siege. Drastic martial law regulations were issued: no one was allowed to be out after eleven o'clock at night; permits were required to get in and out of town, and even to and from the suburbs; the 2nd Battalion of the Transvaal Scottish Regiment was brought over from Johannesburg, followed by the Irish Regiment; all the roads leading into the town were held by strong pickets, and the whole of the encircling range of hills was occupied by armed men day and night. Strong commandoes of sun-tanned Boers on their wiry horses passed through to the north, west, and east; the town police patrolled the streets in couples armed with rifles and carrying full bandoliers of cartridges; and at night the whole of the police force stood to arms, while the town was efficiently patrolled by a Citizens' Civic Guard.

And as small matters are sometimes as important as great, it may also be recorded that the pending municipal elections throughout the Transvaal, which in normal circumstances would have sent the people into a mild fever of excitement, were postponed *sine die*. There was quite enough real warfare in front to make elections something too tame, particularly in the rebel districts.

By this time the rebels were fairly on the loot. They showed their fine patriotism by advancing in force upon some unlucky little winkel (store), taking everything they wanted, from saddles to ladies' *lingerie*, and calmly giving a commandeering note redeemable by the "South African Republic." The

UNDER MARTIAL LAW.

Pretoria suburbanites applying for permits to go home. They could not otherwise pass the military pickets.

DELIVERING UP ARMS IN PRETORIA—LADIES HURRYING TO THE POLICE STATION.

intelligent reader may wonder why rebels out on the stern business of overturning a Government and establishing a Republic should show, as they did, such marked partiality for ladies' underclothing. The explanation, according to credible witnesses, was that the men in many instances were only allowed to join the movement upon condition that among the first things they commandeered must be some family linen for those left at home. The women did not mean to let the men have all the good things.

But to return to the serious business of the rebellion. Storekeepers and others coming into Pretoria from outside were full of the lawless doings of the rebel bands who were scouring the countryside, commandeering horses, waggons, carts, saddles, harness, provisions, and in one case even taking an overcoat from a man who was on his way to Pretoria, on the logical, if illegal, plea that the patriot in the field would need it more than a man who was not going to fight. The rebels also rushed a police post (Greyling's Post), and seized the horses, saddlery, and rifles.

Rebels also were seen quite close in to Pretoria, on the kopjes to the east of the town, and so close was the danger that there was talk of the capital being rushed one night. The dash would most certainly have been made had it not been for the fact that General Botha was too quick for them. More men were brought in, the prompt formation of the Civic Guard released the town police for active military duty, there were more swift and mysterious

movements of troops, and then General Botha left Pretoria with a force of picked men for a destination unknown. Scarcely anyone in the town knew that he had gone, and as all the potential rebels were in the town and could not get out, so close was the cordon drawn that the punitive expedition completely caught the rebels napping. General Botha arrived at Rustenburg on the morning of October 28, and, without pausing, put himself at the head of the men who already had assembled there, and came upon Beyers and his commando before noon.

The rebels were astounded, for they laboured under the curious delusion that they would not be attacked by their own flesh and blood, and when they saw an imposing force of burghers descending upon them they turned tail and ran. It is said that the Loyalists could have shot every one, including Beyers, but that there was a general understanding that the rebels were to be taken alive, and that the Loyalists were not to be the first to shed blood. So what might have been a smashing fight, with terrifying losses so far as the rebels were concerned, developed into what was quite properly described by General Botha in his despatch as a " headlong rout " lasting the whole of the day and resulting in the capture of eighty of Beyer's men, all fully armed. But towards the end of the day, when the pursued and pursuers became heated and tempers began to rise, the rifles came into use. One of General Botha's men was wounded, and in return the Loyalists bowled over several of the rebels. The chase ceased when dark-

ness set in, but at daybreak it was renewed with redoubled vigour. The rebels, following old traditions, had by this time scattered into small bands, with the object, of course, of reassembling at some future date at a prearranged spot. Beyers himself, with a small following, escaped in the direction of Lichtenburg.

Simultaneously Colonel Brits reported that he had reached Schuit's Drift on the Orange River, had attacked and defeated a combined German and rebel force, and that the invasion into the Cape had been finally broken. The same day Colonel Van Deventer, who was in charge of the operations in the Northern district of the Cape, around Kenhardt, reported several successes by the patrols under him, resulting in a respectable " bag " of killed, wounded, horses, rifles, ammunition, and maxims.

It will thus be seen that the rebellion had a bad start. So far as could be gathered from the prisoners, they were thoroughly disheartened and disillusioned. Something had gone wrong somewhere; it was to have been a walk-over. They attributed all their misfortunes to the prophet Van Rensburg, whose advice they had been following. It seems hardly credible that presumably intelligent men could be led away by the gibberings of a prophet; but when one saw some of the prisoners that were brought into Pretoria one could only feel sorry for them, and doubly angry that educated men like Beyers should take advantage of their simple-minded nature to lead them into such a bloody adventure. Some of them actually said that they did not even know for whom they were

fighting; the commando had come to them, had told them to "upsaddle," and they had just done as they were told. Some of them thought they were "Government men" fighting against the British, and were amazed when they found they were fighting against Botha. Of such elements are rebels made. Of course, what had gone wrong was the contemplated invasion of the Union by Maritz with his rebels and the Germans. According to the time-table he should have been near Pretoria. The poor Transvaal dupes were not to know that he was the other side of the Orange River, well inside the German frontier, nursing a wounded knee, with Colonel Brits and a very warm "pack of hounds" out for his brush. Then and for weeks afterwards the rebels in the field, both in the Transvaal and Free State, persisted that Maritz would soon be on the scene to put things right.

They were satisfied that the whole of the Northern portion of Cape Colony was "afire." No doubt it should have been, but Colonel Van Deventer was doing the "firing," and two days after his previous report he sent in another despatch recording further successes, including two Captains, a Commandant, and two Lieutenants—one of them our old friend Captain Joubert, one of Maritz's specially selected men and his adjutant. Two days later, in the Kenhardt district, Colonel-Commandant Celliers reported the capture of the rebel leaders Major Ben Coetzee and Captain R. De Villiers. The former was Maritz's General Staff Officer, and, next to Maritz himself, was perhaps the most determined and desperate of

the rebels. Other satisfactory news from this theatre of operations was from Colonel Brits, one of whose patrols of only 50 men attacked 150 of Maritz's men at Schuit's Drift, and, without loss to themselves, completely routed them, with many killed and wounded, and took eight prisoners, including two Lieutenants.

CHAPTER VII

Government's four problems—Operations in the desert—Lichtenburg fighting—Kemp's treachery—Beyers flees to the south——Rebels round Pretoria—" Japie " Fourie, " Jack " Pienaar, and " General " Muller—Albert Silver Mine engagement—White flag treachery—Muller's commando wiped out—Muller wounded and captured—Pursuit of Kemp—His capture of Schweizer Reneke—Hoisting the Vierkleur—Advance on Kuruman—Captain Frylinck's plucky defence—Surrender of Kuruman—Kemp's flight through the desert—A clever escape.

THE Government, at the beginning of November, had at least four serious positions to deal with. There was always the possibility that the Germans might emerge in strong force and again attempt the invasion of the Union, or they might attack in overwhelming force the Union column operating from Port Nolloth, and repeat the Sandfontein disaster on a larger scale, or they might essay a similar driving-back movement against the forces operating from Luderitz Bay. The German menace was a sufficiently serious proposition, but added to this was the fact that the rebels were active in three separate theatres—namely, in the northern portions of the Cape Colony, in the northern and western portions of the Free State, and in the north-western portions of the Transvaal.

The main operations against the Germans were

promptly suspended. Containing forces only were left at the three base points, and the bulk of the first line of offence rapidly transferred to the scenes of the rebellion.

Colonel Van Deventer and Colonel-Commandant Celliers, as already stated, had vigorously handled the situation in the Cape districts, but for many weeks after their most striking captures they were constantly at work chasing small parties of rebels, who were as elusive as a will-o'-the-wisp, appearing suddenly to blow up a section of the newly-laid strategic railway across a portion of the desert from Prieska to Upington, and disappearing into the desert. It was a heart-breaking business, for the sandy and waterless nature of the country makes it a purgatory for both man and beast. We can, for the time being, bid these untiring men farewell, bearing in mind that they were still battling with sand, dust, flies, thirst, and rebels, while the more stirring events to be recorded were occurring in the Free State and the Transvaal.

Operating simultaneously with General Botha in the Rustenburg district, Colonel Alberts commenced operations in the Lichtenburg district. Arriving at Treurfontein Station on October 29, he discovered several strong parties of Boers, under the redoubtable Commandant Kemp, in the neighbourhood. Commandant De Villiers was sent out with a strong patrol to reconnoitre, but fell into a trap, and before he knew quite what had happened found himself and men at the mercy of a strong commando. It was the first instance of white-flag treachery of the rebellion,

and De Villiers was not expecting it. The rebel commando had white flags attached to their rifles, and when De Villiers and his men approached them, expecting a wholesale surrender, the rebels attacked him and captured the Commandant and 110 of his men.

Flushed with this success, the rebels then advanced against Colonel Alberts from two different points. There was a smart encounter, but the Loyalists gained the day, drove the rebels from the field, and chased them for a distance of twenty miles. The rebels lost 13 killed, 36 wounded, the latter including Commandant Classens, the leader of the rebels, who was captured; altogether 240 were captured. The loss on the Government side was one killed. Satisfactory to relate, the pursuit by the Government forces was so spirited that they were able to come up with their comrades who had been captured, and recovered the whole patrol of 110 men. Altogether a most satisfactory engagement, not only for its immediate success, but for the damaging effect it had upon the rebellion in this district. Colonel-Commandant Alberts, reinforced by another mobile column under Commandant De Beer, continued the pursuit, came in touch with Kemp, and proceeded to hustle him towards the Mafeking-Kimberley line, where it was hoped he might be intercepted.

Beyers, after his defeat by General Botha at Rustenburg, had rushed southwards in the hope of finding sanctuary in the Free State. Colonel Lemmer was hot-foot after him, and in the meantime Beyers was attacked by a small commando under Com-

mandant De La Rey Swartz as they passed the railway line near Bloemhof. The rebels did not stop to fight, but lost a few prisoners and pushed on. Beyers evidently was in a fearful hurry to get away, dreading the wrath of Botha, whom he probably believed to be close on his heels. Colonel Lemmer certainly was, but he was just too late to prevent Beyers from making good his escape across the Vaal River. Colonel Lemmer found himself operating in country unknown to him, with the result that before he could find a crossing Beyers had got away in the direction of Hoopstad, with a loss, however, of 9 killed, 11 wounded, 364 prisoners, 300 rifles, much ammunition, 60 carts, 1 waggon, about 300 horses, and a large number of bicycles. The Government force lost 2 killed and 9 wounded.

Meantime another dangerous commando had appeared on the scene in the shape of a commando re-formed from the forces so promptly dispersed by General Botha in the Rustenburg district. With the exception of Beyers, who had gone south, all the others appear to have made their way towards Zoutpansdrift on the Crocodile River, some thirty miles north-west of Pretoria. General Botha ordered the Rustenburg commando to drive them away. The commando had an unpleasant surprise, for, keeping in too close to the mountain, the rebels enfiladed them, killed two, wounded five, and took several prisoners. It was a nasty little defeat, and the disaffected in Pretoria soon got to know about it, and spread the tidings with great glee.

General Botha's answer was sharp and swift. He

himself promptly took out a strong column, but the rebels as promptly took to their heels and again scattered into small parties. The game they meant to play was soon disclosed by the commando under "Japie" Fourie, who crossed the railway line and blew up a section in order to prevent the movements of the armoured train, which, with machine-guns, was likely to prove a thorn in the side of the rebels. This Fourie, it should be noted, was a Captain in the Active Citizen Force, and it is clear that he had induced many of his men to join in rebellion by means of the gravest misrepresentations. Many of the prisoners were utterly astounded to find themselves attacked by large forces of burghers, having been told that all the burghers were on their side, and that they had only to fight the British. This information, they said, had been given to them by Beyers, Rev. Broekhuisen, Pienaar, and others. For the moment we leave "Captain" Fourie to disappear into the bush, from which he will reappear at a later stage.

Pretoria also was threatened from another quarter, the redoubtable General Muller having got together a considerable body of men in the neighbourhood of the historic little town of Bronkhorst Spruit, some thirty-five miles east of the capital. Bronkhorst Spruit itself had been captured by a solicitor named Van Wijk, assisted by some of the local residents. Colonel-Commandant Mentz (the Government Parliamentary Whip, by the way) was soon in pursuit of Muller, and came up with him near the Albert Silver Mine at daybreak on the morning of November 4. For nine days 150 of the Natal Carbineers and a number of the

Burghers answering the call.

Loyalist Burghers (wearing white armlets).

Mounted Police had been closely following the rebels, and both pursued and pursuers had almost reached the limits of exhaustion. Now that the loyal burgher commandoes had converged, the forces joined up, and, making a supreme effort, by a hard forced night march, saw the rebels, about 250 strong, about five miles ahead.

Off they went at top speed, over veld covered with ant-bear holes. The tired horses kept putting their feet into the holes and were falling down all over the place. The rebels' horses were almost dead-beat. Muller evidently did not like the look of things, for he sent out a messenger under a white flag to the advancing column addressed to his old friend Commandant Opperman, saying that he did not want to fight against his "brothers," and if the Government commando would go back he would do the same. Colonel-Commandant Mentz's reply was a brief "Unconditional surrender." To this Muller made no reply.

Meantime the Natal Carbineers and the Mounted Police had been moving swiftly round to the left, quite unobserved by the rebels. When Muller saw, from the reply, that he would have to make a fight for it, he made a dash for a neighbouring kopje, rushing round it on his left in order to get out of the fire of the burghers who were attacking him from the front.

Round the foot of the kopje the rebels flogged their horses, and just as they thought they were out of danger they ran "slap-bang" into the Natal Carbineers and Police, who were galloping just as

hard in the opposite direction. It was an utterly unexpected meeting on both sides, and in two seconds both forces were mixed up in a most bewildering manner. It was a mad rough-and-tumble, for many of the Loyalists had not even time to get their rifles out of their buckets. Some used their hands and punched every rebel head they could reach, or grabbed them by the throat and hurled them to the ground. The majority, however, used their bayonets, and slashed and stabbed at everything within reach.

The rebels very soon had enough of this "rough house," and drew back about 160 yards. This gave the Loyalists a chance of a sort, though outnumbered. However, they dropped from their saddles, tied their horses' reins round their boots, and opened fire. The rebels got it pretty badly, for the Carbineers and Police rather fancy themselves with the rifle, and they easily proved themselves the better marksmen that day. It was curious fighting, for there was no cover save that afforded by clumps of grass, and if a man showed so much as a finger a bullet came singing close to him. A feature of this engagement was the number of men who had bullets through their coats without suffering any other injury. The horses, which were used for cover, also suffered badly. Of one bunch of seventeen horses ten were killed.

There was one extremely bad feature towards the close of the fight. Two white flags were hoisted by the rebels, and Lieutenant S. R. Haines of the Natal Carbineers, thinking the fighting was over, stood up and was about to go forward to receive the surrender when he was shot in the stomach at close quarters,

receiving such a terrible wound that death followed soon afterwards.

About half an hour afterwards the rebels surrendered. According to the sworn testimony of Sub-Inspector Betts, of the Police, the white flag treachery and the shooting of Lieutenant Haines were particularly shocking. He swears that during the fighting he saw two rifles go up with white handkerchiefs attached to them. Lieutenant Haines thereupon gave the order to cease fire, and stood up to receive the expected surrender. As he stood up one of the raised rifles was deliberately lowered and fired at Lieutenant Haines, and then the rifle was again raised. When the rebels intimated their desire to surrender, Sub-Inspector Betts says he walked across to the spot where the two rifles went up, and there found the Rev. M. Fourie, brother of "Japie" Fourie. He was lying down, having been wounded, but when taxed with shooting Lieutenant Haines under the white flag he shook his head and denied it.

In this fight the rebels lost four killed and many wounded. Seventy prisoners were taken, including a German spy. General Muller and the rest of the commando had got away early in the fight, but they were followed by a portion of the Loyalist commandoes, while the Carbineers and Police remained to rest themselves and horses and to collect the dead and wounded. These matters attended to, they once more set out after the rebels, and on the following morning came upon them unexpectedly in a kloof (narrow valley). The rebels evidently thought themselves quite safe from pursuit, for they do not

appear to have made any extensive preparations to guard against surprise. Luckily, or unluckily, it again fell to the lot of the Carbineers and Police to be the first to get into action (they were acting as advance guard), and they did it in whirlwind fashion. They charged through the thick bush, and were among the rebels and at work before the rebels realized what had happened. They were engaged in the task of cooking the morning coffee when the first shot rang out, and within five minutes it was all over. Colonel-Commandant Mentz, in specially referring to the work of the Carbineers and Police, stated:

" They simply worked into them and finished them off in a very short time, and gave them the surprise of their lives."

The officers of the Police were Major Kirkpatrick and Sub-Inspector Betts, while the Natal Carbineers were under Captain Morris and Lieutenant Hay. No official list of the rebel casualties was published, but one of those present states that there were 18 killed, 41 wounded, and 120 prisoners. Among the killed was Captain Wolmarans. General Muller was seen to fall wounded, then, aided by two of his men, clambered upon a barebacked horse, and in the mêlée got away with his two companions. In the thick bush it was almost hopeless to look for him. About a quarter of a sack of ammunition was taken —mostly soft-nosed and " dum-dum."

A week passed before Muller was located. Then Commandant Moller, one of Colonel-Commandant Mentz's commandants, received a hint, and took out

a patrol to a spot about sixty miles to the north-east of Bronkhorst Spruit, between the Maas and Olifants Rivers (not far from General Hertzog's farm in the Middelburg district), where Muller was reported to be in hiding. In the darkness Moller got separated from his men, but he went on alone, and came upon a lonely farm-house, where he found General Muller lying wounded in both legs, accompanied by the two rebels who had escaped with their wounded leader. Muller begged that his life might be spared. Commandant Moller promptly took them prisoners, and, having sent for a motor-car, brought all three prisoners into Pretoria. It was a daring and important capture, for General Muller was the man mentioned by Maritz in his ultimatum as one of the leaders he wished to consult.

It is time we returned to Kemp—the most daring, determined, and resourceful of all the rebels. This is the Kemp who was with Delarey during the Anglo-Boer War, and if all reports speak truly it was Kemp who was responsible for most of Delarey's successes in that campaign.

After his defeat by Colonel Alberts, Kemp was traced to the Schweizer Reneke district, where it was reported that he was trying to get another commando together, aided by the prophet Van Rensburg, who apparently spent most of his time in exhorting the weaker brethren to stand firm, and promising all sorts of successes. After a time the recruits got together in sufficient numbers to enable him to make a move with some 800 men, including the prophet, a minister of religion, and a lawyer as secretary.

On the morning of November 3 a portion of his commando occupied the little country town of Schweizer Reneke. They commandeered forage and supplies from local storekeepers and some Government waggons and mules, as well as all serviceable horses to be found in the possession of civilians. The Union Jack was taken down, and the Vierkleur hoisted over the court-house. Kemp called upon the inhabitants to assemble in front of the court-house, and then made a speech informing them that all the Transvaal and Free State were in rebellion, that a Republic had been proclaimed, and that he intended to form a flying column of men with good horses, to go one portion north to Vryburg, and another to the Free State to join De Wet. His success here brought him more recruits, and he left the same evening with some 1,000 mounted men, many of his men having two or three spare horses. The force proceeded down the valley of the Great Hart's River, and despite a hot pursuit by the Government forces, managed to get clear away, owing to the fact that they were well mounted and had so many spare horses.

The commando appears to have made for the little railway town of Pudimoe, on the main Cape–Rhodesia Railway, where they hoisted the Vierkleur over the court-house and looted a lot of fodder from the Government stables. They patronized the Boer stores quite freely, and spent a good deal of money. They fraternized quite freely with the townspeople; even Kemp was not above talking of his plans, among his observations being the threat that when they

got " Janie " Smuts they would make mincemeat of him! Among other interesting information dispensed was the statement that 40,000 Germans would be in the Transvaal within three weeks, with 300 guns.

At sundown the commando moved out to the north in the direction of Vryburg, and on the morning of the 6th crossed the line at Brussels, fourteen miles south of Vryburg. The commando was now split up, some 600 of the best mounted men forming the main advance body, and they proceeded to loot and commandeer at every farm and store they passed, their plunder consisting of horses, food, and forage.

By this time, the Government forces being unable to come up with the rebels, measures were taken to organize the Defence Forces of the towns farther west and north. Kuruman and Griquatown were the towns specially liable to be singled out by Kemp for attack, for it now appeared clear that he intended to make for the west and try to join Maritz in German South-West. Government forces, therefore, were concentrated upon the places named.

On November 7 Kuruman was isolated, the rebels having cut the telegraph-wires. The same afternoon Kemp's commando arrived before Kuruman. The local defences were in charge of Captain Frylinck, Adjutant to Commandant Van Zyl, who was in command of the district. Commandant Van Zyl had been called away to the west some days before. During his absence the rebels had arrived at Kuruman. A town guard consisting of 42 men had been raised, and forts had been constructed to defend the town. Captain Frylinck also had about 50 mounted

volunteers under his command. On their arrival the rebels sent an ultimatum demanding the surrender of the town. No notice was taken of this.

On Sunday morning Captain Frylinck with about 30 men pluckily engaged the rebels outside the town, although they were over 1,000 strong. He held them back for some time, inflicting some losses and taking 3 prisoners. He was reinforced by 50 men of Van Zyl's commando under Captain Badenhorst, and continued to oppose the rebels about a mile east of the town. After about an hour's fighting, in which Frylinck lost 3 wounded and the rebels sustained between 15 and 20 casualties, he retired on the forts. Subsequently, by arrangement between Captain Frylinck and the townspeople, Frylinck moved out with his men, and the rebels received the arms of the town guard. They took all available horses, but did little damage in the stores. They paid for such articles as they required.

On the evening of November 9 Kemp attacked Frylinck about four miles from Kuruman, but was repulsed. The rebels then moved off south-west towards Dingle.

On hearing of the rebel move towards Kuruman, Commandant Van Zyl had come east as fast as possible. On the 11th Captain Frylinck joined him, and he followed Kemp with a small force of 100 men. On the 13th he came in contact with the rebels at Mamaghedi. He succeeded in heading off their commando, which was marching towards Postmasberg, and pushed them westwards into and over the Langeberg. Van Zyl had no losses; the rebels had

1 killed. During the night Captain Kruger, who had been operating with 50 men in the Langeberg, where he had captured 7 of Kemp's men, was ambushed, having 3 men slightly wounded.

Kemp continued his march—or rather his flight—to Mount Temple (eighty miles from Kuruman) and Witzand. His line of march was strewed with carts which the rebels were forced to abandon. Large numbers of horses which had been left behind owing to weakness were also found every day by Van Zyl's men.

On November 16 Kemp was attacked at Klein Witzand by Commandant Van Zyl with about 200 men. The rebels occupied a very strong natural position, and held the only water for many miles around. After an engagement lasting five hours, in which the rebels lost 15 killed and 7 wounded, and Van Zyl 1 killed and 3 wounded, the latter had to retire, as the nearest water was nine miles away, at Xangs. Eleven rebels surrendered voluntarily to Van Zyl the next day.

Colonel Royston, with the Natal Light Horse, was guarding a section of the Orange River east of Kheis Drift. On hearing of Kemp's advance through the Langeberg, he marched north to intercept him. Colonel Royston made a dash for Kheis Drift, which was undefended, and reached it after a long and heavy trek, at midday on the 18th. Horses and men had been without food for forty-eight hours, and were completely knocked up. A squadron was here detached to guard some stores and ammunition farther east.

At 2.30 p.m. Colonel Royston's observation post reported that a large body of men was approaching the drift, carrying a white flag and wearing white arm-bands like those of the Union forces. Taking them for a Union force which he was expecting, Colonel Royston allowed them to come up to his outpost. It was Kemp's advance guard. At the outpost they suddenly dismounted, and began to fire volley after volley into the Natal Light Horse. Four were killed and several others wounded, including Major Helbert and Captain Knyvett. Many horses were also hit. The main body of the rebels then tried to rush the camp, but were beaten back. Sniping continued until late. Colonel Royston lost 7 killed and 15 wounded. The rebel losses were estimated at between 40 and 50 killed and wounded. Nine dead bodies were picked up in one place.

Kemp retired that night to a point on the river about three miles below Kheis. From there he moved farther along the north bank of the river to Groot Drink, which he reached on the 19th. From there he made a big detour to the north-east in the direction of the Kalahari Desert—a move which he was able to make as, owing to the recent rains, water was plentiful on the edge of the desert. In this way he was enabled to elude the Government forces along the Orange River, and reached Rooidam, thirty-five miles north of Upington, on the 25th. There an action was fought, in which he sustained severe casualties and 50 of his men surrendered. On the night of the 25th he moved in a westerly

direction along the sand-dunes of the desert, and succeeded in making good his escape to the west.

The manner of his escape deserves to be told in some detail as illustrating how resourceful a man Kemp is when he is in a tight corner. The S.A.M.R. and the Natal Carbineers were close upon his track, and as they moved along in parallel columns they could see Kemp and his men less than half a mile away, and some who had lost their horses could be seen running, their feet being bound in big sheets of leather—cut from saddle-flaps—to prevent their feet from sinking into the sand. The pursuers were coming up rapidly, for their horses were in much better condition, and if Kemp had continued straight on he was bound to be overhauled. His goal, the German frontier post, lay straight ahead over sandy but comparatively easy ground; but he knew that the Loyalists would have him before he could get there, so he turned abruptly to his left and disappeared among the sand-dunes.

It seemed a mad thing to do, but his pursuers admired him for it, for they naturally thought he was going to stand and make a fight for it among the sand-hills. So they turned and charged after him at top speed. They had crossed two dunes when suddenly a volley ripped out and caught them on their right flank. A few saddles were emptied, and the Loyalists were brought up with a sharp turn. It was a shock they were not expecting, but they quickly took steps to meet it, and prepared to surround the position. Of course, all this took some time; but they were satisfied that Kemp could not get out without giving fight.

There was a pretty fight, as the list of casualties shows, and in the end the Loyalists stormed the position, and found—not Kemp; he had got clear away, and left behind about 70 men, who had consented to fight a rearguard action in order to delay the pursuers. They had dug themselves into the soft dry sand, and held up the Loyalists for many hours. In the meantime Kemp, adopting the wily tactics of the wounded buffalo, had made a big circular movement through the sand-dunes, had come out behind the attackers, had crossed their spoor almost at the exact spot where he had turned from his original straight path into the sand-dunes, and, leaving his rearguard and the Loyalists to fight it out, he went on his way to the German post unmolested. It was lucky for the Loyalists that he was pushed for time, or he would certainly have caught them in the rear and probably have annihilated them.

Just one little anecdote deserves to be told here. When General Botha (who was directing operations from Upington) was told that Kemp had left the main track and the Loyalists had him completely trapped in the sand-dunes, he replied with a thoughtful look: " Let us make sure before we send the news home." The next day, when he was informed that Kemp had slipped through the net, he remarked with a wise smile: " I always thought Kemp was cleverer than the whole lot of them !"

When the Loyalist forces came to follow up Kemp's spoor they found, to their surprise, that he had been able to get over the last stages of his terrible journey

by digging up stores of oats for his exhausted horses and food and *bottled beer* for himself and men, evidently placed there long since by his German friends, who had communicated to him the whereabouts of this "manna in the wilderness." The Loyalists were only a few hours behind Kemp—so close, in fact, that the beer-bottles were still moist. It was a tantalizing discovery!

CHAPTER VIII

The Free State—De Wet's "patriotic" frenzy—Reitz made rebel headquarters—Republican proclamations—Capture of Vrede—De Wet's extraordinary speech—"Five Shilling Rebellion"—Winburg captured—Sand River fight—De Wet's son killed—De Wet in a rage—Ladies save the flag—Lindley taken—Flag spat and trampled upon at Heilbron—Treachery at Harrismith—The fort at Bethlehem—Parys looted—Kroonstad besieged.

For the time being the trouble in the Transvaal was at an end. All the known commandoes had been put to flight, and only small bands remained to be kept on the move and rounded up as rapidly as possible. Remained now only the Free State, where an extraordinary condition of affairs had been developing owing to the absence of sufficient Loyalist forces to control the situation. The Loyalists were furious, but General Botha was undoubtedly right in crushing the rebellion first in the Transvaal—removing the danger which threatened the capital—and then transferring practically all his forces to the Free State, where a much bigger problem awaited solution.

For some time prior to actually going into rebellion De Wet had been steadily getting out of hand. Ever since the funeral of Delarey he had been working himself up into a state of patriotic frenzy, and was in constant communication with Beyers, Kemp, and

Maritz, not to speak of the leading Free Staters. The meeting at Koppies, already referred to, gave pretty fair evidence of his sentiments, though for some time they were only known to his intimate adherents. From the outset, however, he had always made a strong point of the iniquity of attacking a poor, innocent, inoffensive neighbour. At that meeting at Koppies he was asked by one of those present what he was to do :

" Don't ask me what you must do," he said. " Rather ask me what I will do. If that is the question, then I say ' death ' first."

This certainly was straight talking, and gave his family cause for hard thinking. It is reported that they had other reasons for believing that the political fever was running a fast course and reaching a dangerous stage. It is stated that early one cold morning he called up all his family from their beds and led them to a kopje at the back of the house, where he stood in front of them and, spreading out his arms towards the east, exclaimed:

" See, Jesus Christ ! He calls, ' Save your people; now is the time.' "

Needless to say, the shivering family saw nothing, save that their venerable parent was making an exhibition of himself.

Let us try and follow his movements after he returned from Pretoria. From the moment he arrived at his farm Memel he was incessantly active, and from the 17th onwards he was constantly addressing meetings of farmers—sometimes armed—all

along the route between his farm Memel, the town of Heilbron, and Koppies. On the 22nd there was another big meeting at Koppies (which had been adjourned from the 13th). Among the Transvaal leaders present were Kemp, Pienaar, and Wolmarans, and a special messenger came from Beyers, who then was lying at Damhoek, and brought the message to the meeting that in the Transvaal everything was in order, and that the burghers were practically under arms! This, of course, was a few days before he had been routed.

In return for this comforting news the meeting passed a resolution as follows:

"Whereas the Dutch South African people in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal are oppressed, this meeting resolves to confide all further measures to General Beyers in the Transvaal and to General De Wet in the Orange Free State."

However, the time was not yet ripe for overt action, and De Wet told them to wait a little longer, but to resist the police if any attempt was made to commandeer their horses or rifles.

The same evening De Wet, with an armed escort of 60 mounted burghers, left for Heilbron, where a meeting was held at the house of Rocco De Villiers, and he subsequently proceeded in the direction of Frankfort. On the following day (23rd) a force of armed rebels prevented the holding of a meeting which had been arranged at Rhenosterdraai for the purpose of obtaining volunteers to fight against Maritz. That same night a rebel force occupied Heilbron, and on the following day (24th) another

rebel commando, under N. W. Serfontein, M.L.A., made a demonstration at Reitz, seized a train in which were some volunteer recruits proceeding to Kroonstad, and took their rifles and ammunition.

Rumours of the lawless speeches and seditious propaganda had reached Volksturt, and an attorney named J. A. Joubert, accompanied by a Mr. Steinkamp, left in a motor-car and proceeded to De Wet's farm Memel, in the Vrede district, where they had a long talk with De Wet, urging moderation. The old man did not take it in good part, and told Steinkamp to go outside and repeat his remarks to the assembled burghers. Steinkamp protested, and said he was only there to speak to De Wet; but the General with emphasis insisted upon it, and with much misgiving Steinkamp went outside, and repeated his remonstrances and well-meant advice.

De Wet's only comment was to order them to be taken prisoners and treated as spies. He added, as an afterthought, that if they tried to escape their guard was " to shoot them dead."

They were promptly seized, and told to write to their wives what had happened. Both men wrote in English, and when the letters were handed over by the guards to De Wet in order that he might " censor " them, the old General broke out like a fury, and demanded to know what they meant by writing in the language of those " hell-hounds " who had made them suffer so ? The letters in English were destroyed, and the prisoners then wrote the moving story of their arrest in brief but well-chosen words in the language " of the people "—in other

words, Dutch. They were taken with De Wet's commando for some days, saw much of the happenings now to be recorded, and their evidence three months later made interesting and convincing reading. From them we have been able to learn many things. For instance, that De Wet interrupted his rebellious acts by going away and meeting General Hertzog, who told him that he (Hertzog) had been deputed by ex-President Steyn, who was too ill to travel, to come and see De Wet on matters relating to the "cause." Hertzog stated that he had a letter which had been handed to him by ex-President Steyn, which he had received from General Botha. De Wet asked to see it. Hertzog said he wouldn't part with it," as the letter was private," but he did tell him the contents, which were to the effect that General Botha begged Mr. Steyn to use his great influence in order to prevent bloodshed, which certainly would follow if there was rebellion, adding that in the great misfortune that had overtaken the country he (General Botha) felt quite powerless. Hertzog said that Mr. Steyn had replied to General Botha that he had on several occasions warned the Government, but they had not heeded his words, and this was the result. De Wet said he had not given Hertzog any written reply, because, as he had told the burghers before, "Hertzog was a man they could trust in the dark," but his verbal reply was that "General Botha must resign and agree to the establishment of a Republic."

De Wet made much of the fact that General Botha had offered a safe-conduct to himself (De Wet),

Beyers, and Kemp to proceed to Pretoria and discuss matters, and he appeared to consider it as an evidence of weakness on the part of the Government, remarking: "A strong Government does not treat with rebels." At the same time he said he regarded the order as a slim Boer trick to get him away from his commando for a week, so that his burghers might be induced to return to their homes; therefore he would have none of it.

This meeting of De Wet and Hertzog was remarkable for another incident. The meeting between these two apparently was in private, but De Wet could not throw off the habit of holding a meeting and delivering the inevitable oration. On this occasion he mounted a trolley, and hauled out of his pocket a five-coloured flag, being the old Republican flags of the Transvaal and Free State combined. Waving it aloft, he said the flag was made during the late war by a committee of ladies under the chairmanship of Mrs. Ferreira, and they had presented it to him. He carried it with him while he was wandering about through the Free State during the Boer War, and, later on, hid it with his papers in a cleft in the rocks near the Vaal River. After peace was signed he fetched the flag from its hiding-place, and had since kept it in his house. It was his ambition to see that flag flying over Pretoria as the flag of the Republic. That was the flag that would be hoisted in Pretoria, and then a new one would be made of the same pattern for permanent use, while his own flag would be taken down and carefully preserved.

It is desirable at this stage that the proclamations of the rebels be placed on record. The declaration of war was made in the following terms:

To All Burghers of the Union.

It is made known that whereas the Government of the Union has decided to conquer German South-West Africa, and has made the members of Parliament approve of the decision of the Government on inaccurate reports and assertions, We appeal to all burghers to do their utmost and exercise all their influence for the prevention of the conquering of German South-West Africa, and at the same time to refuse to be used by the Government to fight us with arms, as our only aim is the honour and welfare of the people and mother-country.

C. R. De Wet,
C. F. Beyers,
Generals of the Protesting Burghers.

Steenbokfontein,
October 28th, 1914.

On the following day another proclamation was issued as follows:

Notice.

Notice is hereby given to all burghers of the Union that, whereas the Government of the Union has decided to conquer German South-West Africa, and the members of Parliament belonging to the South African Party, on *incorrect* reports and statements, have confirmed the decision of the Government; [and as Parliament has taken this step without consulting the nation, whereby the rights of the people (volksrecht) have been outraged;] and whereas protests have been raised against the Godless attack on German South-West, against a nation that has

never done us any harm, but has always been well disposed; and whereas the Government has deprived the public of its right to protest peaceably by proclaiming Martial Law and regulations, now therefore we continue to protest, arms in hand, against that so dangerous principle, which the Government desires to carry out against the wish and will of the nation, being convinced that our nation will be plunged into the greatest misery and disaster, and that God's curse will fall on us, if this resolution of the Government is carried out.

As our attitude of protest is not to shed fraternal blood, but on the contrary, as already proved, to avoid this where possible and under no circumstances to assume the offensive (aanvallenderwijze op te treden), we in conclusion call upon all burghers to use all their powers and influence against the conquest of German South-West Africa, and at the same time to refuse to be used by the Government to fight against us with weapons, as our only object is the honour of God and the welfare of people and country.

(*Signed*) C. R. De Wet,
C. F. Beyers,
Generals of the Protesting Burghers.

Steenbokfontein,
October 29, 1914.

[The words "protesting burghers" deserve to be taken particular notice of, because they evidently had been carefully thought out. Not only then, but afterwards, the rebels took up the attitude of injured innocents, and contended that all that was in their mind was to protest against the attitude of the Government in attacking German South-West—the dear Germans "who showed such love for us during the Boer War," said Hertzog.

Of course this hardly squares with De Wet's speeches, nor does it (as Mr. John X. Merriman tartly put it in the House of Assembly) quite explain why they went round with guns in their hands loading up cartloads of ladies' underlinen and carting it away !]

But to resume:

By this time rebellion was in full swing in the Free State, and commandeering was going on practically all over the place. Literally a state of brigandage and lawlessness prevailed. A Republic was declared, and the town of Reitz was made the rebel head-quarters, and remained in possession of the rebels for six weeks, while there were outrages, thieving, and general lawlessness and terrorism at Kroonstad, Bethlehem, Heilbron, Vrede, Lindley, Harrismith, Parys, and other places.

The following proclamation was issued from Reitz:

"THAT every man may know on which side he ought to take his stand, I hereby make it known that the struggle goes on to win back what we have been unjustly deprived of, the independence of South Africa. The South African people want to be their real selves. That this is impossible so long as we remain a British colony is the feeling of ourselves and of many thousands. We have been dragged against our will into a war with Germany. The sons of our people must be sacrificed for the British nation, whose one object in the last war was to blot our people out. Thousands and tens of thousands of the graves of women and children bear witness to this. We are out to win. Deeds must bring our cause victory. No power in the world is fit to withstand the thousand men who are here on the veld. We shall to the limit

of our powers safeguard each one of us who hearkens to our commands."

This grandiloquent document was signed by Wessel J. Wessels, who had a pretty good conceit of himself, as will be seen from another proclamation which he issued on the same day as the effusion printed above. It started like this:

"Hereby do I make proclamation that anyone who shall oppose my authority or who shall be proved to have hurt our cause by word or deed will be at once placed under arrest and banished from the district. . . ."

And much more to the same effect with regard to the spreading of intelligence "likely to hurt our cause."

The town was put into a state of martial law, and no inhabitant was allowed to be outside after 8 p.m. without a special permit. There was another interesting feature. The names of the Loyalists were placed on a list, and the Mayor of the town was directed to warn them to conduct themselves quietly and to keep a close tongue in their heads under pain of banishment.

It is not easy to give the events in strict chronological order, inasmuch as the rebellion was started almost simultaneously at half a dozen different places. As a matter of interest we may as well commence with De Wet.

It appeared that at four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, October 28, General De Wet entered Vrede with about 150 mounted men, of whom half to two-thirds were armed.

After passing through the town gate a chase ensued after a post-office clerk who had been posted on the outskirts of the town to form an estimate of De Wet's forces as they approached. The clerk, mounted on a bicycle, managed to retain the lead from a number of horsemen, in spite of their threats to shoot him.

He was, however, overtaken in front of the post-office, from where he shouted the information he had gleaned to the postmaster (Mr. Evans), who was waiting at the instruments to despatch the news to the Transvaal. The postmaster succeeded in getting his message through before the men had time to burst the doors and prevent him. As soon as they got into the office they smashed up the instruments, knocked down the postmaster, and kicked him.

The rest of the troopers galloped through the town in all directions, ordering the inhabitants to assemble at the monument in front of the Dutch Church, and they were promised a sjamboking if they disobeyed.

General De Wet had meanwhile taken up a stand on the monument, and ordered that the Magistrate should be brought before him. Two men were despatched to the Magistrate's office to order the latter to attend the meeting.

On entering the office, one of the men (De Wet's son) extended his hand to greet the Magistrate (Mr. Colin Fraser), who told him he would not give his hand to a rebel, and, when ordered in the name of the General to attend the meeting, he replied that he was not going to attend a meeting held by the enemy. This message was brought to De Wet, who was furious, and sent six men down to bring him

(the Magistrate) by force, and if necessary to drag him up.

The men again entered the R.M.'s office, and laid hands on him, pulling him out of his chair. Mr. Fraser thereupon said that if they were going to take him by force he would go. He walked up with them, and faced De Wet with a defiant air.

General De Wet, after employing some abusive language to the Magistrate, addressed the meeting as follows:

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN AND BURGHERS,—I have asked you to come together here to explain to you my position."

Then, turning to the Magistrate, he said:

"Magistrate, I want you to get a shorthand-writer to take down every word that I am going to say, because, whatever I may do in the future, I can never commit a greater act of rebellion than I have already committed. I am going through to Maritz, where we will receive arms and ammunition, and from there we are going to Pretoria to pull down the British flag and proclaim a free South African Republic. All those who side with us must follow me, and those who side with the Government must go with them. I signed the Vereeniging Treaty, and swore to be faithful to the British flag; but we have been so downtrodden by the miserable and pestilential English that we can endure it no longer. His Majesty King Edward VII. promised to protect us, but he has failed to do so, and allowed a Magistrate to be placed over us (he is one of the pestilential English), who is an absolute tyrant, and has made it impossible for us to tolerate it any longer. I was

charged before him for beating a native boy. I only did it with a small shepherd's whip, and for that I was fined five shillings."

Here the Magistrate interrupted him and asked him whether he did not plead guilty. De Wet admitted that he had pleaded guilty, but ordered the Magistrate to keep quiet, saying he would allow him to say as much as he liked when he (De Wet) had finished speaking; if he would not hold his tongue he would make him hold it.

"But," he continued, "after the Magistrate had delivered judgment, instead of reprimanding the boy and ordering him in the future to be obedient and to do his duty, he looked at the native as if he would like to give him a kiss. The Magistrate is the brother-in-law of a man for whom I have the greatest respect, and who is very dear to me (President Steyn), and for that reason I will give him another chance, otherwise I would have taken him prisoner and handed him over to the Germans. The Magistrate's father was one of the staunchest pillars of the church, and if he were alive to-day he would be heart and soul with me in this movement, and condemn the dastardly act of robbery which the Government are going to commit.

"The ungodly policy of Botha has gone on long enough, and the South African Dutch are going to stand as one man to crush this unholy scandal. Some of my friends have advised me to wait a little longer until England has received a bigger knock, but it is beneath me and my people to kick a dead dog. England has got her hands full enough. I hate the lies which are constantly being spread to the effect that thousands of Australians, Canadians,

and Indians can be sent to fight us. Where will England get them from? She has not enough men to fight her own battles.

"I am going through the town to take the following six articles—viz., horses, saddles, bridles, halters, arms, and ammunition, and if anybody should refuse to hand to my men these articles, if they should be found in their possession I will give him a thrashing with a sjambok. I now order the storekeepers to go and open their shops, and I will select men to go round and take whatever I require, apart from the above articles, and they will give receipts for what they take, and if they will not open their shops willingly I will open them in another way.

"My advice to you English is to remain quiet in your houses and not interfere with my men, and if you don't, beware when I come back. I have got my eight sons and sons-in-law here with me, and the only people left on my farm are my wife and daughter. Anyone can go and see them if they like, and I request the Magistrate to give them any help they may require if he will do so."

De Wet then sent the Magistrate to his office, and his commando proceeded to go through the town and take such things as they required. The police-station came in for early attention, where they seized everything they could find and destroyed what they did not take away. Later in the day, when leaving the village, De Wet informed the police-sergeant that he must carry on as usual, for the rebels if they won, and for the Government if they were successful! This the sergeant did with the utmost goodwill, for as soon as he was satisfied that De Wet was well out of the place and not likely

to return he promptly rounded up all the rebels in the town and brought them before the Magistrate for a little legal treatment.

South Africa gasped with astonishment when it discovered De Wet's reasons for going into rebellion. The general opinion was that he was suffering from softening of the brain, and that his proper place was inside a home for the mentally weak. It certainly had the effect of giving newspaper writers and cartoonists something whereon to exercise their powers of witticism, while General Smuts officially blessed their efforts by contemptuously dubbing it "this five shilling rebellion." However, even a five shilling rebellion can be an exceedingly troublesome thing to handle with such a man as De Wet at the head of it, for he wielded extraordinary influence in the Free State.

Swelling with importance at his lawlessness at Vrede, De Wet moved on with his commandoes, gathering recruits by the hundred, towards Winburg, where he repeated his outrageous conduct, and took the Resident Magistrate and Senator Stuart prisoners.

Commandant Cronje, M.L.A., of Winburg, without waiting for reinforcements, moved out with a loyal but small body of Winburg men with the hope of joining up with other small Government forces who were mobilizing in the neighbourhood. De Wet heard of Cronje's movements, and attacked him near Sand River Bridge, at Doornberg. Commandant Cronje's men put up a spirited fight, killed 8 to 10 of the rebels, and took 20 prisoners, 11 of whom were wounded—a most admirable result in

return for 3 killed and 6 wounded. De Wet himself does not appear to have taken part in the fight, but he quickly sent reinforcements, who made a charge, retook the prisoners, and captured all Cronje's waggons. In this engagement Daniel De Wet, one of General De Wet's sons, was killed. Some of the captured rebels stated that they were sjamboked by De Wet to induce them to join the rebel ranks, this proving that De Wet was still as fond of that disciplinary weapon as he was in the days of the Anglo-Boer War.

De Wet returned in a furious rage to Winburg, the loss of his son at Sand River having badly soured his temper. The leading persons who had been taken prisoners were badly treated, many houses of Loyalists were searched in unceremonious fashion by the rebels, and at the house of Mr. Cronje, M.L.A., the loyal Commandant, furniture was smashed and legal papers in his office destroyed. Shops were looted right and left of all sorts of things, including ladies' lingerie and all sorts of articles of drapery. De Wet himself savagely assaulted the Mayor (Mr. Wright), and the rebels literally cleaned out his store, and did not even give receipts for the goods taken. De Wet's rage was such that he was absolutely outside the bounds of reason. He actually threatened to burn down the town, and for two days kept the inhabitants in a state of terror. Meantime his burghers made themselves extremely offensive by their conduct, behaving like a lot of hooligans out for a Bank Holiday. Winburg certainly has bitter memories of De Wet and his horde of thieves.

One fine incident must be told in connection with De Wet's occupation of the town. Three ladies, Mrs. Zylstra, wife of the Town Clerk, Mrs. W. Pienaar, and Miss Van der Berg went to the town to see what happened to the Union Jack, determined to rescue it if pulled down by the rebels. When the rebels came in, the flag was lowered, as they thought it would be, by a rebel who was ahead of the main party. The ladies hurried across and secured the flag, and as they were taking it off the cord other rebels galloped up, and asked what they were doing with it. They replied that they were going to keep it until the return of their menfolk, who were out with the Government forces, and Mrs. Pienaar thereupon wrapped it round her waist and defied them to take it away. For a moment it looked as if the rebels would take it away, but they thought better of it, and the three plucky ladies carried it away in triumph, put it in safe-keeping, and some weeks later it was again proudly hoisted to its honoured place over the Town Hall amid resounding cheers.

It is pleasing to know that the three brave ladies have since been presented with a silken Union Jack apiece by admirers on the East Rand, and the Sons of England and South Africa have presented them each with a patriotic brooch, as a memento of their plucky conduct.

The town of Lindley appears to have been the next town visited by De Wet, for on the morning of November 3 a crowd of about 2,000, most of them young men, galloped through the town as if out for a picnic, and had great stories to tell of the

advance of Maritz with his 30,000 Germans. In fact, they knew that he was close to Bloemfontein, and that so soon as that town was taken they were going to march on Pretoria, and much more fudge of the same description. This was not serious, but their conduct was, for they looted the shops in a disgraceful manner, taking not only military stores, but everything that took their fancy, including ostrich feathers, which they wore in their hats, and preened themselves round the town like a lot of coster-girls. De Wet's son appeared to be in charge of this bright lot of "jongs," and was as autocratic as his father, threatening to burn the place down because some long-suffering citizen wanted to get a receipt for goods taken. The rebels were so insolent that one of them even snatched the mackintosh from the arm of the Magistrate.

Heilbron also came in for attention from De Wet's crowd under Ben Van Niekerk, who personally came into the town ahead of his commando and pulled down the Union Jack from the front of the Magistrate's office, whereupon a local rebel spat upon it and four "lady" school teachers trampled it underfoot. Curiously enough, although the Republican flag subsequently was hoisted, it was afterwards pulled down, and during the period of the rebel occupation (three weeks) no attempt was made to raise a flag of any kind. The Magistrate and police were arrested, and all prisoners in the gaol released, their places being taken by the police. The railway was cut, telegraphs and telephones destroyed, and the town completely isolated from October 24 to

November 16. The usual commandeering from the stores went on, but the rebels were otherwise well behaved. One incident is worthy of note. On October 27 General Hertzog and Advocate Colin Steyn (son of President Steyn) arrived in a motor-car, and conferred for some hours with the rebel leaders. It was generally understood that their efforts were in favour of peace, but they did not take the public into their confidence. Colin Steyn also visited Lindley, and there tried to induce young De Wet to stop his lawlessness, but without success.

The capture of the town of Harrismith was a notable rebel success, and well illustrates the difficulties that confront Loyalists during a period of civil war, when the friend of to-day may be the foe of to-morrow, and you do not know he is your foe until by some act of treachery, if nothing worse, the truth is driven unpleasantly home. Such a case was that of the capture of Harrismith. Commandant Howell was in charge of the little garrison, and excellent arrangements had been made for its defence. A cordon was placed round the town, and all the roads were guarded, and it would have required a considerable force to gain possession of it. Commandant Wessel Wessels, however, took it without firing a shot.

He despatched from a telegraph-office outside a message to Commandant Howell, purporting to come from General Smuts, Minister of Defence, complimenting the Harrismith garrison upon their defence of the town against the rebels, and stating that Commandant Wessel Wessels was coming with a

commando to augment the garrison. He hoped there would be no friction between Commandant Howell and Commandant Wessel Wessels—the latter would be first in command over the garrison. Commandant Howell, all unsuspectingly, accepted the message as genuine, and actually went outside, as requested, saw Wessel Wessels, and on his return gave instructions to allow Wessel Wessels and his commando to pass in when they arrived.

The stratagem succeeded perfectly. The commando was allowed to reach the guard, Wessel Wessels gave the password, and telling the guard to join them, the rebels, with whoops and shouts of joy—which the guard took as expressing delight that they had come to relieve the town and join the garrison—galloped towards the market-place. The few people who were out at that early hour—it was about five o'clock in the morning—took no particular notice of the new arrivals until the latter reached the Town Hall, when they began to show a very aggressive disposition. Commandant Howell came out to meet them, and both he and his Adjutant, Mr. Whenwell, were treated most unceremoniously.

Meanwhile the rebels rushed into the Town Hall, where hundreds of members of the garrison were sleeping.

The rebels promptly ordered these to "Hands up!" and the men, roused from their slumbers in this unceremonious fashion, had no option but to comply. The rebels then went into an adjoining room occupied by the police and disarmed them. Another body of rebels had gone to the Show Ground, where the

mounted burgher commando was quartered, and caught them unawares in the same fashion. Commandant Howell, who made a dash for it on the first horse he could get, arriving there a few minutes too late.

Everyone at the Town Hall was forbidden to leave on pain of instant death, but Head-Constable Maclaren managed to slip away to the police-station, where, with the help of the few policemen on street duty, he managed to secrete some thirty rifles and sixty revolvers which were lying at the police-station. A constable also was successful in getting away with all the horses and mules (which he took to Van Reenan) before the rebels had succeeded in blocking all the exits from the town. A considerable number of mounted loyal men also succeeded in getting out and reaching Van Reenan.

Following the plan of all the rebel leaders, Wessel Wessels called the inhabitants together, and made a speech couched in the usual bombastic terms and vituperation of Generals Botha and Smuts. After doing a fair amount of "commandeering," the rebels moved out in the afternoon, accompanied by a number of recruits, including two school teachers, a Captain of the Defence Force, and a number of disloyal townspeople. Two days later they returned, and, as one person describes it, "They settled like locusts on the defenceless town. Systematic looting of the stores commenced, and almost every horse and mule in the town was taken." The railway was torn up and telegraph instruments smashed. The police refused to carry out the instructions that

"Hands up" at Harrismith.
The defence works round the Town Hall during the Rebellion in the Free State.

Rebel hunting.
The S.A.M.R. and Body Guard crossing Tiger River between Bethlehem and Reit

were issued to them by the rebels, despite bloodthirsty threats. At one time it was stated that the Republican flag was to be hoisted, and a new Magistrate, police, and civil servants to be appointed by the rebels. However, neither of these threats was put into operation, and after twelve days of terrorism the rebels moved out, and did not return. They were well laden with much loot, Loyalist arms, ammunition, and horses and mules. A loyal commando from Van Reenan arrived on the scene after the rebels had gone.

The little Free State town of Bethlehem had its share of excitement, if not much actual fighting. The majority of the burghers of the town and the immediate district were noticed to be very lukewarm in their loyalty from the outset, but they were slow in declaring their attitude. Head-Constable Walker, of the police, and the few undoubted Loyalists promptly took steps to put up a fight. All the arms were collected, and the police and Loyalists marched down in a body to a big six-storeyed concrete mill (the Kaffrarian Steam Mills), the only building in the town that offered any prospect of withstanding a siege. It stands close to Bethlehem Station, and having clear ground all round it, formed at once a magnificent post of observation, fort, and dwelling-place for the defenders. The thousands of bags of mealies in the mill were used to strengthen weak places, redoubts of mealies were built up at the entrances, and the main entrance narrowed so that only one person could pass at a time. All the valuable Government property was removed to the

mill, including police horses and the Loyalists' motor-cars. On the roof, 80 feet from the ground level, a sandbag wall was erected, with embrasures left for rifle firing. To make the position doubly effective every point within range was carefully measured and the range marked off.

All these preparations were watched with much interest by the spies, whereof the town was known to be full, and it subsequently transpired that they faithfully reported everything that went on to the rebels outside. While all these measures for defence were being carried out by the police, Commandant Prinsloo, who was nominally in charge of the Government forces in the Bethlehem area, devoted most of his time to what were called "negotiations" with the burghers. The little garrison, however, had little time for this sort of business, and very early made up their minds that if the burghers could not make up their minds what they were going to do, it was a poor look-out for the Loyalists to rely upon them. The burghers, all this time, were drawing rations from the mill, and the garrison made no secret of their suspicions when the burgher field-cornets came to draw rations. For a fortnight this extraordinary position existed. Then the burghers got restless, alleging that the garrison had captured two well-known men and were holding them in the mill. The garrison denied this, whereupon the burghers developed an ugly temper, and demanded that they be allowed to search the mill. At first the Loyalists refused, rightly suspecting it to be a very thin trick to rush the fort. After a while, however, they

consented to allow emissaries to go over the building. Of course there were no prisoners there. The burghers knew that well enough, but they merely wanted to spy out the strength of the Loyalists' preparations. They saw what they wanted, and there is no doubt that they were considerably impressed.

Developments were not long delayed. A few hours later Commandant L. J. Rautenbach made a fiery speech to the burghers, and declared himself as one of De Wet's Generals. As everybody had expected, the burghers promptly threw in their lot with the rebels. Commandant Prinsloo brought the news to the garrison, and, as superior officer, advised Head-Constable Walker to surrender. He had mistaken his man. Walker said he would hold out to the bitter end. It was only about an hour later that a horseman arrived, carrying a white flag, with a written demand from Rautenbach for the surrender of the garrison, demanding a reply by 3 p.m. He got the reply at once, the messenger being informed that the Loyalist garrison were having no dealings with rebels, and if Mr. Rautenbach wanted the Loyalists and the fort, he could jolly well come and get them. But Rautenbach was fonder of negotiating than fighting, and an hour later there came another letter demanding that the white flag be hoisted on the roof in place of the Union Jack, in token of surrender, that the garrison then march out and give up their arms; failing compliance, all the houses of the Loyalists would be burned and plundered. The letter contained the following inter-

esting sentence: " Commandant Prinsloo has already reported to us that you have his instructions not to defend."

The garrison expressed the same contempt for this threat as for the first missive, nor were they any further alarmed when they saw the rebels come swarming in and taking up positions outside the Loyalists' houses. The envoy, who waited to see whether this parade of force would move them, was told by Head-Constable Walker to return to the rebels and tell Rautenbach and his mob that they were much better at frightening women and destroying property than they were at fighting, and when they had finished their cowardly work in town the garrison would be glad if they would come along to the mill and try to take it; a warm welcome was awaiting them. Finally he said he wanted no more rebels near the mill, and if any more of them came within rifle shot, whether under the white flag or otherwise, they would be fired on.

Off went the envoy, and promptly some 300 to 600 rebels came down to the mill and surrounded it at a distance of about 600 yards. Unfortunately, they were in such a position that the garrison were afraid to open fire for fear of hitting the inhabitants in the houses behind them. Darkness fell soon afterwards, and in the night the rebels withdrew. At daybreak the police sallied forth with a view to speeding the parting guests, but they had gone too far. However, a rebel patrol appeared on the other side of the mill and commenced cutting telegraph and telephone lines, but a few well-directed shots

brought down a couple of horses and scattered the enemy. From this time onwards the town itself was not threatened, for an improvised armoured train was quickly put into operation, and did excellent service up and down the line for two or three weeks until the big forces from the north swept the rebels out.

Bethlehem is proud of its little feat, and the tale of how less than a hundred men kept the flag flying against six times their number deserves to be remembered among the incidents of the rebellion.

The town of Kroonstad, from the end of October, was practically in a state of siege, for rebels swarmed round it on all sides, the railway was cut to the north and south of the town, a Town Guard was formed, trenches dug, sand-bag redoubts constructed, and the whole place put in a position to meet any attack. For a fortnight they had an anxious time till the arrival of Colonel "Manie" Botha, the well-known fighting commandant of the Anglo-Boer War, who arrived on the scene with some 200 men for the purpose of beating off the attack that was threatening. On November 5 rebel patrols had fired on the Loyalist outposts, and on the following day Colonel Botha went after the enemy, came upon them some twelve miles out, and, though they were 400 strong, his 200 men attacked them and killed 1 and wounded 7. The rebels, realizing their superior numbers, charged the Loyalists, and went right through them, but withdrew before the arrival of reinforcements. A few days later Colonel Botha, now reinforced, went for the rebels again under Mayer and Celliers,

chased them for thirty miles, and ran down a considerable number, including Hendrik Serfontein, M.L.A.

The pretty little town of Parys, on the Vaal River, also came in for serious attention on the part of the rebels, who in this instance were more like brigands. They looked and acted like a lot of common thieves, and systematically pillaged the stores, sending the loot out to their camp literally by the trolley-load. When it is stated that the losses in this one place alone amounted to something like £10,000, it will be realized what sort of high-souled patriots the rebels as a whole were. The patriots were not above threatening peaceable persons with physical violence if their demands were not complied with. In one instance the sjambok actually was used, Mr. Botha, an aged Loyalist and a local J.P., being thrashed in the presence of two ladies because he had given evidence against a man who was in sympathy with the rebel cause.

In a rebellion such as this it can well be imagined that there were numerous instances of rough treatment on the part of the rebels, not only against British, but particularly their fellow-countrymen who remained loyal. It was, in fact, a very terrifying time for farmers in the rebel districts. One of the best-known men in one of the Free State districts wrote:

" I have been surrounded for more than a fortnight by rebels. My neighbours, excepting one, including my bywoner [squatter who lives rent free] have made it hell for me. They have stolen my hackney, fillies,

What the Rebels did at Ventersburg Police Post. Safe blown open and papers destroyed.

and oxen, and attempted to take my Friesland bull, for which I paid £250 in America, but after being driven for about three miles he evidently objected to be driven by rebels, and as he is rather a rough customer to deal with he was left behind, and he returned home."

The above is typical of what was happening all over the Free State, and if ever the Government should appoint a commission to take evidence concerning these outrages it will make a volume of lawlessness and low-down conduct that should make the Free State " takharen " (ashamed) of themselves for a generation.

CHAPTER IX

Government gives last chance—Amnesty offered to rebels—Proposed conference—Beyers' curious conduct—De Wet's double-dealing—Botha commences operations—Battle of Mushroom Valley—De Wet's smashing defeat—Exciting incidents—De Wet on the run—Loyalists in pursuit—De Wet wants conference—Government refuses—Work of the columns—White flag incidents—Surrender of Van Broekhuisen.

It must not be imagined that the Government, in smashing up the Transvaal rebels, were animated by any desire to show a vindictive spirit. The whole of the evidence shows that they acted throughout with the utmost tolerance. So much so, that even their own supporters were constrained to remonstrate with them on their leniency, especially at the opening stages. As already stated, General Botha and his commandoes could have annihilated Beyers and his following at the first encounter at Rustenburg, but he stayed his hand. This tenderheartedness on the part of General Botha was well known by Beyers, and he made use of it to inveigle unsuspecting burghers to join him, even going so far as to tell them that General Botha was on their side and was directing operations from inside the Government, and assured them that there would be no bloodshed! In fact, Beyers and the other rebels appear to have made up their minds that not they, but the Govern-

ment men should be provoked into firing the first shot, and that once the Government men had done so, this would constitute a *casus belli*, and the rebels would be justified in shooting. This view is borne out by a minute of Beyers' war council, which states:

"Unhappily, blood has been shed because Government people charged the opposing party. According to evidence of this side it appears that the first shots came from the Government force. This is in execution of orders of General Beyers that no shooting may take place except in self-defence."

While General Botha and Colonel Alberts were dispersing the rebel bands, negotiations were being pressed by the Government with Beyers, Kemp, De Wet, and others, with a view to a settlement without further bloodshed. It was mentioned above that General Botha had communicated with ex-President Steyn in the hope of inducing De Wet to cease his foolishness, and similar efforts were all the time going on in the Transvaal. How De Wet regarded General Botha's overtures has already been told, but the Government did not despair of inducing him to come round, especially as Beyers showed a tendency to listen to reason. To encourage the waverers the Government issued a proclamation offering an amnesty to all who laid down their arms by November 21. As there had been no heavy losses inflicted upon the rebels in the Transvaal up to that time, and as the rebels in the Free State had not suffered very extensively—although in both Provinces blood had been shed and several lives lost

—the Government hoped that at the eleventh hour reason would prevail. The proclamation is as follows:

NOTIFICATION TO ALL CITIZENS OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

PRETORIA,
November 12, 1914.

The Government, with a view to preventing bloodshed, have spared no effort to avoid internal strife, and have afforded ample opportunity to those who have joined in the rebellion to lay down their arms and return to their allegiance.

In spite of these efforts a large number of persons still continue forcibly to resist the authority of the State, and are now actually engaged in organizing armed resistance to the Government, are in conflict with the military forces of the Union, and cause not only considerable loss of life, but also great loss and damage to the property of loyal and peaceful citizens.

In order to remove doubts which appear to have arisen among those who entered into the rebellion as to the manner in which they are likely to be dealt with should they surrender voluntarily, the following public notification will supersede all previous notices in this regard, except in the case of persons who have acted upon such previous notices before the date of this notification.

1. All persons in rebellion on and after the date hereof are hereby called upon to surrender themselves voluntarily with their arms and any Government property which they possess at the office of the nearest Magistrate or special or resident Justice of the Peace, or to any officer of the South African Police or Union Defence Forces, on or before Saturday the 21st November, 1914.

2. All persons who do surrender will not be criminally prosecuted at the instance of the Government, but will be allowed to return to their homes and remain there on condition that they take no further part in the rebellion, give no information or any other assistance whatever to the rebels, and do nothing or say nothing whatever which is likely further to disturb the peace or to prolong the rebellion.

3. This amnesty will not, however, apply to persons who have taken a prominent part in the rebellion, or who while in rebellion have committed acts in violation of the rules of civilized warfare. The Government reserve their authority to deal with these cases on their merits.

4. All rebels who fail to comply with this notification and surrender themselves as aforesaid will be liable to be dealt with according to the rigour of the law.

5. The private property (movable and immovable) of rebels who do not voluntarily surrender in terms of this notification will be liable to be charged with the direct loss and damage incurred by loyal and peaceable citizens as the results of acts committed by such rebels themselves or by any other persons in rebellion whether before or after the 21st November, 1914.

It is to be most clearly understood that nothing above contained will in any way limit or restrict the Government in continuing, from the date of this notification, to take the most rigorous and forcible military measures to deal with all persons who are in armed rebellion or to treat as the Government may think fit all rebels captured by the forces of the Government.

LOUIS BOTHA, *Prime Minister.*
General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Union Defence Forces in the Field.

The purport of this amnesty, if not its exact terms, had been communicated to the rebel leaders as far back as October 30, when General Smuts, Minister of Defence, instructed the Commandants of the loyal burgher forces to tell the rebels that they would be pardoned if they would lay down their arms and go home. The message had such good effect that, in the Western Transvaal at any rate, there was every reason to hope the matter would come speedily to an end. General Beyers and General Wolmarans met Mr. Cecil Meintjes of Lichtenburg, and had a long conference on the matter, and General Beyers certainly gave him the impression that he was prepared to withdraw his opposition if the Government would agree to carry out the expedition against German South-West with volunteers only, and would promise that all rebel officers and leaders should not be prosecuted. In fact, these conditions were reduced to writing, and Beyers stated that he could influence De Wet and Kemp to agree. The extraordinary thing is that Beyers, without waiting for the Government's reply (which, it may be stated, was in the affirmative), immediately proceeded to attack the Government forces then guarding the railway line at a point twenty-five miles from Katbosfontein, where Mr. Meintjes had interviewed him the previous evening. Why he could not wait a day to hear what the Government was willing to do is difficult to say. He actually moved off from Katbosfontein a few hours after the interview had taken place, and refused to allow Mr. Meintjes to leave until the commando was well on the march.

It is obvious that Beyers did not want to make peace, that the interview was a mere waste of time, and he knew that the very fact of moving his commando in the direction of Government forces was deliberately calculated to bring about a collision.

However, the Magistrate of Wolmaransstad followed up Beyers, caught him up on the night of the 6th in the Free State, gave him General Smuts' reply, to which Beyers made answer that he must see De Wet personally, but would answer for Kemp. The Minister was communicated with by telegram asking if Beyers might have safe-conduct to visit De Wet, and as at that time General Smuts had received a message from ex-President Steyn that there was every reason to believe that De Wet had at last agreed to have a conference with him (Steyn), the required permission to Beyers was given.

We can now therefore understand the reasons which induced the Government to proclaim the amnesty above-mentioned, and the Loyalists who chafed under the apparent inactivity of the Government will appreciate the very admirable and humane reasons that induced General Botha to refrain from immediately smashing the Free State rebels. So long as there was the slightest hope of a settlement without further bloodshed the Government waited.

It is clear now, however, that De Wet was no more in favour of a peaceable settlement than was Beyers. Ex-President Steyn appears to have done his utmost to find De Wet, who was then dodging about the Free State, and his son, Dr. Colin Steyn, the advocate, spared himself neither day nor night

in his efforts to get De Wet to visit his father at Bloemfontein. We have already seen that General Hertzog was also engaged in these meteoric expeditions, but what his influence was does not at present appear. We have the evidence of Brand Wessels, M.L.A., who said that Hertzog had told him (Wessels) and a deputation who had seen the Government and De Wet on November 3, that "he trusted him not to let his people drown, but also not to let them be down-trodden." Then there is also the caustic remark of General Tobias Smuts, of Ermelo, who told General Hertzog to his face in the House of Assembly —when Hertzog was championing the cause of "the poor down-trodden burghers, who had been murdered, robbed, and wronged"—that the fault of General Hertzog was that he kept silent when he ought to speak and spoke when he ought to keep silent!

Whether Hertzog opened his mouth or kept silent, it does not appear to have had much effect upon De Wet, who refused to attend the conference with ex-President Steyn, openly flouted that gentleman's well-meant efforts, and announced that his object was "to get to Maritz; after arriving there to return immediately with Maritz to Pretoria. There, in the capital of South Africa, we shall, if God (in Whom all our trust is) so wills, haul down the flag and proclaim our independence." And as if still further to show that he wanted war, and meant to have war, his commandoes were incessantly active, and were blowing up bridges and railways all over the place, while the Government forces were standing fast at the special request of ex-President Steyn.

General Botha and the Government were not aware of all these overt acts at that time, but immediately the news filtered through of what was going on, and when they learned that De Wet refused to attend the conference, their minds were made up. The proclamation above mentioned was prepared, and dated for November 12, but on the previous day General Botha had gone to the Free State, placed himself at the head of the large loyal forces that had assembled there, and prepared to administer a crushing blow.

He left Winburg on the night of the 11th with the Transvaal commando, proceeding in the direction of Marquard, and after a forced march moved north-east and east in order to surround De Wet, who was reported to be in a spot known as Mushroom Valley. Colonel Brand, with another strong force, moved out from Winburg to Hoenderkop, and came up with a section of the rebels under Hendrik Serfontein, M.L.A.

The cordon was to have been completed by General Lukin (who had just returned from Port Nolloth, where he had been attacking the Germans) and Colonel Brits (who had hammered Maritz, his rebels, and the Germans into quiescence). General Botha and Colonel Brand were to start the quarry on the run, and drive them right into the arms of Lukin and Brits. It was a pretty scheme, and it failed for the very good and sufficient reason that General Lukin did not get the message from General Botha till it was just twenty-four hours too late. It subsequently transpired that the helio man who received the

message directing General Lukin to take up a certain position was not given the secret code word. He asked for the code, and as the sending helio man could not or did not give it, the receiver, suspecting a rebel trick, took no further notice of it, and did not pass it on. So that when General Botha and Colonel Brand attacked De Wet's force of 3,500 men and drove them in headlong rout towards Koraanberg, the mouth of the bag was not closed as they fondly had hoped, but De Wet, with his usual luck, again slipped through. It must have seemed to him like old times.

His losses, however, were very heavy in killed, wounded, and prisoners, while the whole of his laager, consisting of over 100 carts, waggons, etc., were taken, also two motor-cars and 250 prisoners. The rebel losses in this fight were never published, but they were exceptionally heavy, due to the fact that the men with the two machine-guns quickly found the range and in less than ten minutes had scattered the veld with dead and wounded men and horses. It was this unexpected and terrible onslaught that set the burghers on the run, and although the machine-guns were quickly ordered to stop, De Wet's men could not be induced to stay and have the usual duel with the rifle.

There was an interesting rumour floating about afterwards to the effect that both gun teams were given a spell of "C.B." for not firing at the range given them by their superior officer before he left them to attend to other duties some considerable distance away. It is said that when hauled over

the coals for their disobedience they innocently replied that at the range given them they could not hit anything, so they found the range for themselves, and having found it, of course they kept on as quickly as they could until they were told to stop. The point of this quaint little rumour will be appreciated when it is understood that "punishment" of the rebels was understood to be bad form, and that only a stray casualty here and there was expected. It was a humane policy in dealing with one's own flesh and blood, but it irked and irritated many of the British and Loyalist Dutch, who felt, rightly or wrongly, that the Government was altogether too soft with the rebels, and should have punished them with the utmost severity from the start. When the British did get a chance—it was not very often, for the Government preferred to crush the rebellion as far as possible with Dutch commandoes—they rather let themselves go; hence this story of the machine-guns at Mushroom Valley.

But to resume the pursuit of De Wet. Botha's men followed up the flying rebels until their horses were completely exhausted. It must not be forgotten that they had made a long and exhausting forced march during the night, and their horses were tired from the very outset of the fight, whereas De Wet's horses were fresh.

There were many exciting incidents, not the least dramatic being the capture by the rebels, through treachery, of Commandant Fouche and forty of his men. Colonel-Commandant Tobias Smuts promptly set out to the rescue, and energetically attacked

that section of the rebels who had made the capture, putting them to flight and releasing the other prisoners, but the rebels kept their grip upon Fouche, and carried him off. Later on, however, while another stiff fight was in progress, Fouche saw his opportunity and made a dash for it, and got away to Colonel Brand. He reported that the rebels had treated him very roughly and with considerable rudeness. It should also be mentioned that Colonel Brand was instrumental in releasing Senator Stuart and the Magistrate of Winburg, who, as previously stated, had been taken prisoners by De Wet when he entered Winburg.

During the attack by the Loyalists a dramatic incident occurred. It appears that during the fight a body of rebels managed to get within a few yards of a Loyalist force, the Commander not being able to distinguish friends from foes where all were dressed practically alike, with only a white band on the arm to distinguish the Loyalists—a "uniform" easy to duplicate. The big man who appeared to be in charge of the small commando, and who, by the way, was in khaki uniform, signalled to the Commander close to him to fire upon an approaching force, as he said they were rebels. The Commander might have done so with serious consequences had he not recognized one of the approaching leaders and shouted to him asking what he was doing with that crowd. The reply came back: "I am with Botha. Who are you with?" The Commander turned swiftly to the big Commandant, who, however, already had drawn his revolver and, pointing it at

the head of his interrogator, said: "You are my prisoner." Quick as thought the son of the Commander whipped out his revolver and shot the rebel through the body, who reeled in his saddle, his revolver being aimlessly discharged as he fell heavily to the ground. It was a close shave for General Tobias Smuts, and he should be proud of having such a son. The rebel was Commandant Van Niekerk.

During the progress of the battle a sensational accident happened some miles away to General Lukin. While standing on a kopje he was struck by a terrific flash of lightning, which hurled him from the spot on which he was standing to the bottom of the kopje. He was seriously injured, and at first it was thought that he was killed. He was ten weeks under treatment before he was able to resume his duties.

Early on the morning of the 16th De Wet approached the railway line from the east, three miles north of Virginia, where the line crosses the Zand River.

Colonel L. Badenhorst was at Virginia with 180 mounted men of the Active Citizen Force, belonging to a composite regiment of the 9th and 10th Mounted Rifles (Hoogeveld Ruiters and Botha's Ruiters), and he at once proceeded to oppose De Wet. Leaving Captain Van Niekerk with a small number of men to guard the stores, etc., at the station, Badenhorst crossed the river and immediately engaged De Wet, who was in great force, having about 3,500 men. A sharp engagement followed, during which about 2,000 rebels managed to cross the line, while 1,500

were beaten back and prevented from crossing. These withdrew to the east towards Doornkop.

Armoured train No. 2, under Captain Dickson, arrived during the course of the action, and was of great assistance in helping to cut off a portion of the rebel force, which was driven back east of the line.

Lieutenant-Colonel Enslin, who was at Ventersburg Road with another portion of the composite A.C.F. Regiment and a part of Enslin's Horse, had been summoned to Colonel Badenhorst's assistance. He arrived after De Wet himself and a portion of his force succeeded in breaking across the line. Lieutenant-Colonel Enslin pursued De Wet vigorously until late in the afternoon, inflicting considerable losses on the rebels. Captain Cloete, with another portion of Enslin's Horse, took up the pursuit of the rebel force which had retreated eastwards towards Doornkop. A sharp fight took place in the course of the pursuit, in which the rebels suffered heavily.

General De Wet, hotly pursued up the Vet River by the forces of Lieutenant-Colonel Roux, Lieutenant-Colonel Grimbeek, and Commandant De La Rey Swartz, crossed to the south bank, and then fled south towards Boshoff with a small force.

The pursuit was continued by Colonel Manie Botha's commando. De Wet's little force split up into two, and De Wet himself then doubled back north with 25 men, intending to cross the Vaal into the Transvaal. He must have been under the impression that the Union forces which had crossed into the Vaal southwards to operate against him were all the Government had in that area, and that,

consequently, the Vaal River itself would be undefended. He attempted to cross the Vaal River with his little following of 25 men. The outposts of Commandant S. P. Du Toit were on the alert, however, and promptly drove the rebels back.

On the scene of the skirmish one of De Wet's staff officers, whose horse had been wounded, was taken prisoner. De Wet's papers also were secured. The captured officer stated that De Wet, with his 25 men, were all that remained of his commando. De Wet, with six others, managed to cross the Vaal late at night, after the remnants of his commando were beaten back.

Commandant Du Toit promptly arranged to sweep the country north of the point of the Vaal where De Wet was supposed to have crossed the river, and himself, with Field-Cornet Hoffman, started out in a motor-car to obtain news of the fugitives. At Karreeboskuil, about twelve miles from Leeuwdoorns, he received information that seven horsemen had been seen. He started in pursuit, and soon came upon the party. One of them, named Spies (Adjutant to De Wet), surrendered, but the others drew revolvers and continued their flight. Unfortunately, owing to the speed at which the motor was racing, it could not be pulled up dead, and by the time Commandant Du Toit's party were on their feet, De Wet's men had scattered across the veld. Du Toit's party fired on them, and wounded one, who turned out to be De Wet's son-in-law Mentz. De Wet's secretary, H. Oost (until recently the editor of the Hertzogite organ *Het Volk*, published

in Pretoria), had his horse killed. Oost managed to get away on Mentz's horse. Mentz and Spies were brought in as prisoners. Those who escaped with De Wet were Koos van Coller, Wessels Potgieter, "Gert" Muller, and Oost.

A few days later De Wet was in a chastened frame of mind, and sent Brand Wessels to Bloemfontein to President Steyn, saying that he was now prepared to have a conference with him with a view to the restoration of peace, if safe-conducts could be obtained for him and Beyers. President Steyn communicated this request to the Government, strongly urging that the request be granted, and adding: "As I said before, if we do not take advantage of this opportunity I foresee bloodshed and misery that will continue for years. Do not refuse consent therefore. You know General De Wet, and it is only by means of the utmost exertion and by bringing all my influence to bear that he has been prevailed upon to come to me."

General Smuts' reply is worth giving in full:

General Smuts to His Honour President Steyn.

PRETORIA,
November 17.

The Government has seriously considered your telegram of yesterday's date. We feel that the position has entirely changed since General Botha first appealed to you to use your influence with De Wet and Beyers to avert bloodshed. Then no hostilities had yet occurred, and De Wet and Beyers were merely busy forming commandoes. Beyers would not go to you without De Wet, and De Wet

put off from day to day, with the obvious intention of gaining time in order to mobilize a great force. Meanwhile hostilities broke out in the Transvaal, and later in the Orange Free State, whereupon De Wet point blank refused to go to you. Since then bloody encounters occurred in Transvaal and Free State, and many have been killed and wounded. Even yesterday a battle took place at Virginia, with considerable losses on both sides. We feel that, however much we desire peace on an honourable basis and to avoid further bloodshed, the military position has become too serious to sanction the proposed conference. Even now we do not know whether this is not again an attempt to gain time. To his commando he openly scoffs at these negotiations, and asks his burghers why the Government is so desirous of negotiating with rebels, and he assures the poor misguided people that both yourself and General Hertzog are with him; and as no word from you to your people has publicly gone forth advising them and pointing out their duty, your silence, however well meant, is taken by many as approval of De Wet's attitude and allegations. The Government has made its position clear by the issue of a notice containing the terms on which rebels who voluntarily surrender will be treated. To such an extent is public feeling embittered that great dissatisfaction exists among the loyal burghers on account of the leniency of these terms, and the Government feels that the position is likely to become still worse and more fatal than it is to-day if the rebels are to be allowed to extort peace terms from the Government. Unconditional surrender on the basis of the Prime Minister's conditions is necessary, on the understanding that there is at present no intention to apply capital punishment in the case of the leaders.

While we cannot therefore consent to grant a safe-conduct, there is yet every probability that General De Wet has met or will meet General Beyers to-day, and that they will therefore be able to exchange views and, if they so wish, to approach the Government. We extremely regret having to send this reply to your telegram, but looking to the present position, the manner in which it arose, and the security for the future peace of South Africa, there seems no other way open to us.*

After the smashing of De Wet the rebels lost their rallying-point and centre, and the task before the Government forces was to deal with a considerable number of isolated bands, in numbers of anything from 100 or 2,000—though only in one instance was so large a body as 2,000 found together. There were numerous voluntary surrenders. A considerable number of those who had been in the fight at Mushroom Valley came in, and on November 16 the Brandfort commando surrendered *en bloc*. On November 21 General Rocco De Villiers and Commandant Els, both of Heilbron (and both regarded as among De Wet's leading men), surrendered, and following these came the surrender of two of De Wet's sons—Jacobus and Izak De Wet.

The fighting, however, was not all over by any means, and not all the rebels had sufficient discretion to come in. They had got the De Wet virus in their veins, and wanted to play the old hide-and-seek game that he played over the same ground during the Boer War. Some of the poor dupes kept it up in

* The continuation of this correspondence will be found in the Appendix C.

sheer desperation, for it was ascertained from prisoners taken that their officers had assured them that the Government intended to shoot all who surrendered.

To handle the situation it was necessary for the Government forces to split themselves up into numerous columns to cope with the rebel bands, who were to be found here, there, and everywhere. To give an idea of the sort of work that had to be done for weeks, the following summaries of the happenings of two days' operations may be taken as typical of the whole:

Colonel-Commandant L. Botha reported from Harrismith that on Thursday, November 19, part of his commando was attacked by about 200 rebels belonging to the force of General Wessel Wessels. The attack was beaten off, and the rebels were pursued for four hours, when darkness set in. The rebels lost two wounded and captured, and several more wounded who managed to evade the capture.

November 20 Colonel Botha attacked Wessel Wessels' laager, and pursued him for eighteen miles. Thirty-three rebels were captured, including Field-Cornet Van Rooyen. Two dead rebels were found on the scene of the engagement. One of these was the son of General Wessels. The other was the brother of Commandant Howell. The rebels abandoned several trolleys, with ammunition and rifles. Colonel Jacobs, of Colonel Botha's commando, was slightly wounded.

Colonel Roux reported from Hoopstad that his force had vigorously been pursuing scattered bands

of rebels belonging to De Wet's commando for two days. He learned that on the farm Groot Hoek the Government notification was read to De Wet's force, which he had abandoned there after his precipitate flight south over the Vet River. A large number of the rebels, estimated at about 1,000, upon learning the contents of the proclamation, threw away their rifles or hid them in the bush, and declared that they were going straight to their homes. These had since been surrendering in large numbers to the various Government forces. Many of the hidden rifles have been recovered by our troops.

Commandant De Preez, of Vrede, attacked a rebel force at Schaap Kraal. The enemy retired after a few shots had been exchanged. They were vigorously pursued by De Preez, who states that "they fled like springboks." Two rebels were shot and 25 captured, together with a quantity of arms and ammunition. Twenty-one rebels surrendered under the proclamation in this area.

A most unpleasant feature of this rounding-up process was the almost systematic abuse of the white flag. In fact, the rebels in several instances appear to have gone on the principles enunciated by their "kultured" German friends in Europe, that all is fair in war. There were far too many cases for it to be a mistake or an accident. The following shameful incidents may be quoted:

A party of rebels hoisted the white flag on the Farm Middelfontein (on the south bank of the Vet River). Field-Cornet Smit, of Commandant Swart's commando, thereupon went up to the party with

21 of his men. When he got up to the rebels he and his men were suddenly surrounded by a great number of rebels and disarmed and stripped. Some of his men managed to escape, whereupon the rebels opened fire on them, killing one of the men. Smit himself was eventually released, and promptly reported the occurrence to Colonel Badenhorst, who at once pursued the rebels. His men captured 26, including one wounded.

Lieutenant-Colonel Fouche reported from Senekal that two of his commandoes under Lieutenant-Colonel Pyper and Lieutenant-Colonel Krog came into contact with a rebel force of 600 men, under General Rautenbach, at Zandfontein, six miles from Senekal. The rebels occupied a strong position, but were soon driven out. They fled in the direction of Bethlehem and Lindley, and were vigorously pursued. Colonel Fouche's force lost 5 killed and 3 wounded, but 8 dead and 7 wounded rebels were found on the scene of action. Sixty rebels were captured. The rebels again shamefully abused the white flag.

Commandant Davel (" Loffie "), of Reitz, had his leg shot off, and Commandant Naude was dangerously wounded in three places. Field-Cornet De Villiers, of Reitz, was also seriously wounded. The number of wounded was 7 in all ; one man was killed. Twenty-nine of the Government men were captured.

A despatch rider who brought a message from Commandant Koen reported that the rebels hoisted the white flag, and when the Government men got up they fired again, wounding Field-Cornet De Vil-

liers and a burgher named Thomas. The fighting was then renewed, and the rebels hoisted the white flag the second time. William Gibson thereupon went up to a rebel position and disarmed seven rebels. Other portions of the rebel commando were, however, surrounding the small Loyalist force, and it had to retire. The rebel Field-Cornet Roos, of Bethlehem, and several others of the enemy were killed.

Two of Commandant Koen's scouts, Lieutenant Pieter Schalk van der Merwe (14th Mounted Regiment) and Pieter Arnoldus Karremaker, were treacherously shot by the rebels on the farm Ongezund. It appears that five rebels were in the house, and when Van der Merwe was about to shake hands with Ferreira (the owner) he was shot dead by one of the rebels, while Karremaker was wounded by another shot, and then killed by a third.

Another instance of the rebels' treachery was reported by Lieutenant-Colonel Fouche, who stated that Captain Jan Klick, his Intelligence Officer, was shot dead in the street at Ventersburg.

Lieutenant-Colonel van Maltitz, who commanded a loyal force at Ficksburg, moved out against a rebel force at Fouriesburg on November 19. He surrounded the town on the morning of the 28th, but found the rebels had abandoned it. Later the rebels attacked his outposts, with the result that one rebel was killed, one dangerously wounded, and 4 captured. All of these were armed with Lee-Enfield rifles and soft-nosed bullets. The enemy was pursued into the mountains north-east of Fouriesburg.

CHAPTER X

Armoured trains at Reitz—Transvaal rebels active—Fight at Warmbaths—Horrible "dum-dum" wounds—A graveside scene—Fourie on the warpath—Fight at Haman's Kraal—Death of Allan King—Rage of the natives—On the heels of De Wet—Chased by motor-cars—A pretty manœuvre—Rearguard captured—De Wet's tactics—A sandy waste—Motor-cars beaten—The final scene—Surrounded at dawn—De Wet's grim joke.

Among the interesting captures at this time was that of the Rev. Herman van Broekhuisen, the Pretoria Dutch Reformed minister. There was a considerable amount of controversy both then and for some months after as to whether he surrendered under a false name. The Government announced that he had given a false name, and many and bitter were the comments that followed. Later on, in January, when Van Broekhuisen came up before the special court for a preparatory examination in connection with a charge of high treason, it was sworn to by the proprietor of the Vredefort Hotel that Van Broekhuisen went to his hotel on November 26, said he was sick, and gave his name as Van der Merwe. The police and magistrate came shortly afterwards and questioned him, when he said his name was Van Broekhuisen, and that he had acted as secretary to Beyers and chaplain to the commando. According to witnesses he must have been a model chaplain,

for he prayed for both sides. "He prayed for Botha and for De Wet, and for all the other leaders. He also prayed for the men on both sides." Unquestionably a man of exceptional breadth of view! It was this predikant who, at Lichtenburg on the day after Delarey's funeral, urged all the Defence Force officers to hand in their resignations.

The rebels remained truculent in the neighbourhood of Reitz on the Reitz-Frankfort line. The whole of this line was infested with them, and the Government prepared a rod in pickle in the shape of three armoured trains, the "Trafalgar," the "Erin," and the "Schrikmaker," which, excellently armed with quickfirers and picked riflemen and carrying powerful searchlights, had many a merry run up and down the line while the mobile columns rounded the rebels up and drove them up against the railway for the special delectation of one or other of the armoured trains, which, by luck, usually was found to be in the neighbourhood of these interesting operations. The rebels had no love for the armoured trains, and were continually trying to derail them, with, however, very little success. There was one merry little engagement outside Reitz on the morning of November 24. A force of mounted rebels tried to cut off the armoured train "Trafalgar" at a deep cutting overlooked by a mountain from which the crew of the armoured train would have been exposed to deadly fire from above. The "Trafalgar" kept up a running fight, and inflicted a number of casualties, a rebel field-cornet named Koster being killed and Nicholas Serfontein, M.L.A., one of De Wet's three

rebel " Generals," being wounded. On the following day both the " Trafalgar " and the " Erin," while repairing the broken line at the same spot—which had been much broken since the fighting the previous day—had another warm experience, but the rebels were quickly driven off.

Unhappily, the absence of the bulk of the Government forces in the Free State encouraged the Transvaal rebels to come together again. The commando of rebels that had disappeared into the thick bush country in the Waterberg under " Japie " Fourie saw fit to come out again with some mad idea of " rushing " Pretoria.

It came to light some weeks later that a pretty little conspiracy was at this time being hatched in Pretoria, in which the wife of the Rev. van Broekhuisen played a part, the scheme being to raise a rebel commando composed for the most part of policemen, warders from the central prison, and lunatic asylum attendants—a scheme that did not prove successful !

That, however, is only a sidelight. The rebels, as they gradually got recruits together, had been continuously watched, and when the time was deemed ripe four commandoes set out to punish them. The Government forces consisted of a commando under Lieutenant-Colonel " Dirk " van Deventer, the Waterberg commando under Commandant Geyser, a Pretoria commando under Commandant Jones, and a portion of the force under Commandant Theunis Botha. They came across the rebels about thirty miles west of Warmbaths, and there was no nonsense

about it either. Whatever truth there might have been in the Free State rumours that the Government men were to shoot "high and wide," in this particular fight they were out to hit, and hit they did to such good effect that the rebels lost 120 killed and wounded and only 25 prisoners. The Government losses were 12 killed and 11 wounded.

From all accounts it was one of the fiercest fights of the campaign, conducted with great determination and conspicuous bravery. The fact that the rebel leader was an ex-Major on the Permanent Force Staff probably had not a little to do with the serious nature of the fighting, for the Loyalists were furious with him for his treachery. He also knew the seriousness of the position, and fought accordingly; though whether that justified him in permitting his men to use dum-dum bullets is a matter that only a traitor's conscience can decide. The wounds inflicted upon the Government men were frightful; practically every man on the Government side who was killed had been shot with dum-dums. Perhaps the sight of some of their comrades so mutilated had not a little to do with the heavy death-roll on the rebel side.

"They shot us with soft-nosed bullets as one would shoot vermin," said one of those who took part. "And had we seen what was awaiting us after the charge there would have been no prisoners!"

Among the killed was young D. J. E. Opperman, a particularly bright and promising young fellow, who had declined to join his father's (Commandant Opperman's) commando because he wanted to see some

General J. C. Smuts attends the funeral of Lieut. Opperman.

fun quickly, and he did not think he would see it with his father! So he joined Theunis Botha's commando, and this was the sad result. The body was brought to Pretoria and buried there. It was made the occasion for an extraordinary demonstration of sympathy, the burgher commandoes presenting a quite remarkable appearance, for they were men of all ages from patriarchs to boys—the same bronzed, bearded fighters as in the olden days, but now every man in khaki shirt and riding-breeches. Wonderfully picturesque they looked and wonderfully grim and determined they were when at the conclusion of a short but fervid oration by Commandant Opperman, regretting the loss of so brave a son, he said they would go on till they finished the work. The deep "Hoor, hoor!" that rang out was unconventional at a graveside, but it seemed strangely appropriate. The bearded men swung into their saddles again and cantered off to their grim work.

However, very few of these particular burghers appear to have been able to come up with Fourie, who, so far as this rebellion is concerned, was as elusive as was De Wet in his palmy days. After his smashing at Warmbaths he kept out of the way of the watchers of the woods. In fact, he seemed almost to have been overlooked till he made a dramatic reappearance much nearer Pretoria.

Information had been obtained that he intended to attack Haman's Kraal, an important native centre some twenty-eight miles north of Pretoria on the Pietersburg line. The place is of no military importance, but it has a police post, and the rebels probably

looked to replenish their stores and get a further supply of ammunition. At any rate, the place was quite unprepared to put up anything in the nature of a fight, though the local residents built up sandbag breastworks and prepared to resist until reinforcements arrived. On the afternoon of Saturday, November 21, the news reached Pretoria, and steps were at once taken to rush troops out to avert the threatened raid, which was timed to take place after dark. A hundred men of the Pretoria Regiment under Captain Mackenzie and 50 recruits belonging to Enslin's Horse left Pretoria by train, accompanied by Captain Allan King, the Native Commissioner for that district, and Captain Ludorf.

They arrived there at 1 a.m., but found that the police had abandoned the post in view of the contemplated attack in force. (It appeared later that the rebels had postponed their attack owing to the terrific storm then raging.) It was ascertained that a considerable force of the enemy had laagered about five miles away at Klipdrift, and that they were under the command of " Japie " Fourie, J. J. Pienaar, an ex-Major of the Permanent Force Staff, and " Rooi " Jan Du Plessis. Reinforcements were telephoned for, and about 5 p.m. 100 men of the S.A.M.R. arrived, under Captain Rutherford.

At midnight the mounted troops were sent out to surround the rebel position at Klipdrift, and 50 of the infantry were posted at a drift to intercept the rebels. However, the enemy was on the alert, and moved off before he could be attacked. He was followed, and at 11 a.m. next day was found on

Rondefontein in a very strong position, with sangars on a line of kopjes on the left side of the road, his flank protected by a line of rugged hills, and with a high kopje dominating his rear. Captain Rutherford ordered the S.A.M.R. to attack the position, and this they did with great vigour, for there was no love lost between the S.A.M.R. and Fourie's men, owing to the use of dum-dums near Warmbaths. Fourie's men returned the sentiment, and the action quickly developed furiously.

The firing was very hot, and sufficiently nerve-shaking and deadly to cause a stampede on the part of a portion of the troop of Enslin's Horse (recruits), who had been held in reserve. The majority of the horses cleared into the thick bush, and took no further part in the fight. Captain Jacobs, with the few left, pushed round the hill to try and catch the enemy on the left flank, but found the fire so deadly that he had to withdraw and get round the hill on the other side. The enemy proceeded to open out along their left flank, with a view of enveloping the Loyalists' position. It was a critical period, for the rebels were in greatly superior strength, well protected, and every man a marksman. Seventy Loyalists in the firing line against 400 rebels.

It was at this juncture that a most regrettable incident occurred. Captain Allan King (who, as previously stated, had gone out with the Government forces mainly because he was the Native Commissioner for the district, and not because he was attached to either of the combatant sections) saw a trooper fall beneath the fire of the rebels, and went forward

to attend to him. He had bound up his wound and was returning to the rear to take cover when he was struck by a dum-dum bullet. Other bullets struck him—some of them after he had fallen—and he was quickly beyond mortal aid.

Captain Ludorf worked round to the left in the hope of relieving the desperate situation, but the fire continued very severe, and as Captain Jacobs had disappeared, and, owing to the thick bush, could not be seen, it soon became evident that the best the little force could do was to retire as speedily as possible on Haman's Kraal. It was a ticklish piece of work, but the enemy was evidently afraid to attempt a charge and chance the reception they would get on the bayonets of the S.A.M.R. The retirement was carried out deliberately and in good order through very difficult country, with 3 killed and 11 wounded. The rebel casualties were unknown, but in view of the close nature of the fighting they were believed to be fairly heavy. Next day a search party went out to recover the bodies of the Loyalists, and the fact that they had to be left the previous afternoon indicates the serious nature of the fighting and the closeness of the pursuit. That of Allan King was found close to the spot where he had fallen, with other bodies close by. It must also be mentioned that looters had been at work, that the dead had been stripped of their clothing, and their personal valuables and trinkets removed.

The natives of the district were almost crazy with rage at the loss of their "Father," as they deemed Allan King, and when they heard that the rebels

The South African Mounted Rifles leaving for the fight at Haman's Kraal.

Mounted Police returning from the Fight at Haman's Kraal.

were spreading the story that they (the natives, " his children ") had robbed his dead body, their anger knew no bounds. They sent a deputation of chiefs and headmen into Pretoria to see the wife of their dead " inkosi," to assure her of their love for him, and to offer to recover his uniform and personal belongings.

" Say the word, and we will kill every one of these bad men, and also their wives and children !"

But Mrs. King shook her head and forbade them to raise a finger, for well she realized the horrors that might follow if once the natives commenced reprisals. The rebels have to thank the wife of the man they so unfairly shot that all their throats were not cut that night, their wives and children assegaied, and their homes given to the flames. Those who were closest in touch with the natives in those nervy days will be able to appreciate how too horribly near the truth this statement is. And if the natives had once started in that district they would not have stopped there. That danger was overcome with kind and wise words.

The funeral in Pretoria was a wonderful sight, for of Allan King it could be said, as was once said of another man who gave up his life for his friends, " He was a gallant English gentleman."

Not the least striking feature of the scene was the presence of a huge concourse of natives, who, under the direction of their native catechists, sang a solemn " Nunc Dimittis " in the native language, and then, with one unanimous thrilling shout, gave him the royal salute—a token of extreme honour that all South Africans will appreciate.

To Fourie's credit let it be said that some days later Allan King's ring was returned to his mother by "Japie" Fourie himself, who came through the lines for that purpose. He said the only thing he had taken was a pair of field-glasses, of which he stood in great need. It may here be mentioned that some weeks later, after a desperate fight at Nooitgedacht, Allan King's relatives received his watch and a number of papers that had been in his pockets. They were informed that the articles were found on a rebel, but that no questions on the subject would be answered!

But before we come to that tragic episode there is much stirring history to record elsewhere.

The last we heard of De Wet was that he crossed the Vaal River into the Transvaal on the night of November 21 with a few followers. He was closely pursued by Commandant Du Toit in a motor-car, but succeeded in shaking off pursuit with four companions only. The elusive one managed to baffle his pursuers despite the most rigorous search. It appears that he got across to the Reneke district, where there had been secretly forming a small commando, principally consisting of Free State rebels who had been hunted out of the Western Free State. With this force De Wet started westwards with the object of escaping across the desert to German South-West. The little force was well mounted—so well, in fact, that several attempts on the part of the Government forces to surround him were unsuccessful. In one place there was a column of 4,000 men with a front of seven miles searching for him. De Wet has made

many forced marches in his life, but it is safe to say that he never did such a remarkable trek. Those who know this district of South Africa will appreciate it; but for the information of others it may be said that a considerable part of the distance is through practically waterless, sandy country, and that the direction taken was dictated by considerations of water, found only here and there in the water-holes.

Crossing the railway line at Devondale Siding (eighteen miles north of Vryburg) on November 25, he hastened at a gallop westwards. Here the redoubtable Colonel Brits again comes into the story, this time with a fleet of motor-cars—a decided novelty so far as South African warfare is concerned. It was a special motor-car contingent that had just returned to Kimberley after a futile chase on the heels of Kemp for 140 miles or so. They were now sent on from Kimberley to Vryburg by train. Every car had been tested and approved of by experts appointed by the Government, and every chauffeur had been accustomed to drive a car over ground that would give the average European chauffeur nightmare. For in South Africa one has to get accustomed to driving where there are no roads, but there may be anything and everything from rocks as big as packing-cases, to dongas as deep as a church, and occasional stretches of sand in which the car sinks up to the axle, where on the top gear and going "all out" it is just possible to make four miles an hour, while the wheels send up columns of sand (like a terrier digging out a rat) and the water in the radiator bubbles and throws off steam like an impatient

kettle at the outspan. Do this for a few days, and if the car and the tyres and the temper hold out, you may catch your quarry. On this occasion the programme was varied—it always is varied in South Africa—for instead of sand, which had been allowed for, it came on to rain. Heavens, how it rained! Three inches of rain in one day as an earnest of the good times in store, and, of course, mud, mud, mud! And still more rain, and rushing rivers where there should have been a cart-track, and then small dongas 3 or 4 feet deep under the chocolate flood, and bushes and barbed-wire fences. And after the rain and the mud, then sand, sand, sand for miles interminable.

But, not to anticipate the order of events, the start was made from Vryburg at 5 a.m., and the long caravan of motor-cars, all painted khaki colour and filled with armed men from the Carolina, Middelburg, Lydenburg, and Barberton districts, under Colonel Brits and Colonel Jordaan, moved out to the westward. Nine cars were left behind for the purpose of conveying petrol out to the police post at Genesa. Their little adventure comes first in order of time. They left Vryburg on the morning after the big motor column, and, much to their disgust, were held up the same day on the farm "Richmond" by De Wet's rearguard under Commandant Strydom. While the rebels were engaged in the task of smashing all the rifles, Dr. Ralston and the native Police Guide made a bolt. The doctor turned the car round, and, putting on top speed, raced back to Vryburg and informed the authorities there. Meantime the rebels, having damaged the rifles and petrol, ordered the

cars to return to Vryburg and stay there under pain of being shot. They went back as directed, but did not suspend their useful services.

The presence of the rebel rear-guard behind the pursuing column seems mysterious, but the explanation is in reality simple. Colonel Brits was following a geographical direction—in other words, he was going west—and hoped to pick up the spoor of his quarry. The petrol convoy did not follow the same route; apparently they were rather to the north of the line taken by the main column, with the result that they stumbled on the exact line taken by De Wet, and were snapped up by his rear-guard, as stated.

Meantime the main column, a long distance ahead, unable to pick up De Wet's spoor, determined to follow hunting tactics and "range." The column swung to the right in a big circular movement of twenty miles or so, coming back in the direction of Vryburg. Not a sign of the trail. They completed more than half of the circle and arrived at Commando Spruit, and as darkness was coming on they outspanned for the night. At daybreak they moved off again, still continuing the circle, and it was just as they again began to turn towards the west that the scouts in the advance car saw a body of rebels about three miles ahead. Then followed a pretty manœuvre. First one motor-car swung to the right, the next to the left, and so on alternately, until the two long snake-like arms crept round inexorably in a three-miles circle, and despite the deep, soft sand and thick scrub, the points of the "lobster-claws" came

together and the rebels were surrounded. The burghers jumped from the cars and advanced in a circle. When the rebels saw that they were surrounded and escape hopeless, they surrendered. They comprised Strydom (who had captured the petrol cars), Commandant Wolmarans, Field-Cornet J. J. Pienaar, and D. Marais, with 46 men, all of whom were sent back to Vryburg in eighteen of the motor-cars.

The main column resumed the pursuit after De Wet through bushy and sandy country, though not before they had a quite exciting adventure, for word was passed that a considerable body of horsemen was coming upon them from behind. Quickly every car swung round, and again like two big lobster-claws they enveloped the new-comers, who, however, proved to be not De Wet, as they fondly hoped, but a Loyalist commando who also were upon his track.

Once again the column turned and set their faces westward, with the knowledge that De Wet was well head of them, and that through that awful sand the chances were he would give them the slip. In the afternoon his spoor was definitely picked up, and then it was seen that he actually had crossed over the tracks made by the motor-cars in their first circular "ranging" movement, and probably only a few hours after they had passed. However, now they were straight behind him, and only a few hours, for the experienced veldsmen knew the age of the spoor, and it only needed an examination of trampled grass or a broken leaf to tell how long since the party had passed. Then the chase grew really tense, for the

hunters knew De Wet's resources and were well aware that it would not be all plane-sailing in that sort of country. They were soon to learn that.

Suddenly the spoor broke up, and instead of a column of horses, they had separated and gone off into diverging directions like the ribs of a widely extended fan. The spoor had to be followed in several directions until the scattered hoof-marks gradually came together again. They kept on the trail till darkness set in, and then had to camp, for it was useless to try and find a way through the bush at night when it was absolutely necessary to give the enemy no indication of their whereabouts. A native had told them that De Wet had passed along earlier in the afternoon.

With the first gleams of daylight the motor column was off again, and by nine o'clock De Wet was sighted on a rise about three miles ahead. There was no hope of the motor-cars creeping upon him unawares, for the column had to descend a slope into a valley and then climb the hill before they could get to him. However, they hoped the speed of the motor-cars would beat him, despite the sand. The former pretty enveloping movement was again carried out, and the excitement of the burghers was intense as the cars, on their lowest gear and going all out, tore up the sand with frightful din—at the terrific speed of about five miles an hour. It was no country for any Christian motor-car, and it was only a lot of hard-hearted military men who would have asked the cars to do it! They were in the sand up to their axles—and meantime De Wet was getting away on

his fleet horses. The chauffeurs twisted and turned and backed and changed gears—and softly swore. The burghers groaned and perspired and prayed in two languages and swore in three, and in their excitement gripped the seats in front of them and yelled to the chauffeur to make the "verdomde" car go faster! And then, to the agony of those who had gone on the left-hand column, De Wet was seen to be galloping towards the spot where the right-hand column would turn in towards the line of retreat. The left-hand people therefore gave it up.

The right-hand column gained on their quarry until they were within 500 yards, when De Wet's men opened fire and struck two of the cars. The burghers promptly gave an answering volley and made a rush forward. There was a rough-and-tumble for a few minutes as the burghers rushed firing through the bush to the enemy's position, but when they got there they found De Wet again was away, and that this little fight was only a ruse to cover his escape. Two prisoners and one rebel wounded was all the result of this incident. It had, however, delayed operations for some fifteen minutes—precious minutes to De Wet, who was by this time a safe distance away.

From this stage the motor chase in force was practically abandoned. The left-hand column had stopped, and Colonel Brits decided that it was useless for them to proceed, and he returned with them to Marokwen. The right-hand column, however, under Commandants Minaar and Marais, pushed on. But the strain on the cars was terrible. To give an

idea to motorists of the sort of going that had to be encountered on that day, twenty-three miles out of fifty-three had to be done on first gear and 8 gallons of water were used. It was this water difficulty that beat the pursuers at the finish.

They ploughed on through the sand until first one and then another gave up the ghost. The Commandant ordered the chauffeurs to "pool" their remaining water, and out of the whole lot there was found to be enough left for ten cars only. The ten went off, filled with armed men, and the others sat down to wait. The ten ploughed on through the sand, which got deeper and deeper. Then the water again began to give out, and once more the precious drops were pooled, and now there was only sufficient for two cars. These two pushed on, and by the morning were able to reach a water-hole, from which spot they were able to refill their own cars and take back sufficient to enable the others gradually to get up their circulation and ultimately to emerge from the land of desolation.

Meanwhile Colonel Brits had taken up his headquarters at Marokwen, and arranged the final scene in the drama.

Mark the completeness of the arrangements. At Marokwen Police Post there had been waiting seventy men of the Barberton and Middelburg commandoes under Colonel Jordaan, and as soon as Colonel Brits arrived, these horsemen took up the chase. Two camels, well laden with provisions, were sent into the bush to meet them at a later stage; but the bronzed horsemen rode light save for biltong and

such rations as the veldsman knows how to carry in small compass. Meantime the motor-cars of the right-hand column had been sent out in all directions across the desert to hold every water-hole that De Wet could possibly make for. If he and his men had descended upon any of these places held by half a dozen men there would have been a scrap, but it is to be imagined that De Wet and his men would have had water! However, there was no such incident, for De Wet, realizing that his pursuers would try to hold the water-holes against him, determined upon a bold and desperate expedient—he would do without water until he was beyond the reach of his pursuers.

Being, as he thought, better mounted—he certainly had a number of spare horses and was well provided in this respect—he pushed on at an incredible speed. On the Sunday the party rode fifty miles, off-saddling only once, and then for a few minutes only—a feat of endurance for both man and beast that requires some beating. They quenched their thirst—or some of them did—by killing a horse and drinking its blood! Neither man nor horse had water all Sunday and all Monday until Monday evening, when, almost dead with thirst, they found water at the farm Waterbury.

Meantime the pursuers under Colonel Jordaan were hot upon his trail. Their horses were fresher, they were not compelled to make détours to avoid water-holes, but they made straight for their objective—the farm Waterbury. They knew that De Wet must get water there or turn away in the desert and

perish miserably of thirst. They arrived there on Monday evening, and that night Colonel Jordaan knew that the birds had come to the snare. He spoke to each of his men separately, and explained to him exactly what he had to do at daybreak. Not a word was to be spoken, not a word of command given, but every man was to go to the place pointed out to him and do what he had been told.

Before the grey dawn those seventy men crept like lizards through the bush, making a circle of some three miles in circumference. Those who came upon the horse guards were on top of them with rifles at their temples before they could utter a sound.

Then the order rang out on the silent air: "Surrender!"

The weary men heard the call and sprang to their feet in bewilderment. De Wet and H. Oost (editor of the Dutch paper *Het Volk*) made a run for their horses, which had been kept saddled-up throughout the night, but to their dismay found themselves facing rifles. All round them was the sinister glint of the dawn on rifle barrels. The seventy had made a complete circle without uttering a sound, and with rifles to their shoulders they waited grimly for the next act in the drama. It was De Wet's turn to speak, and he was not long in taking up his cue. He remarked that the race was run, and threw up his hands. The others had no alternative but to do likewise, and within a few minutes they had discarded their rifles and revolvers and were under an armed guard.

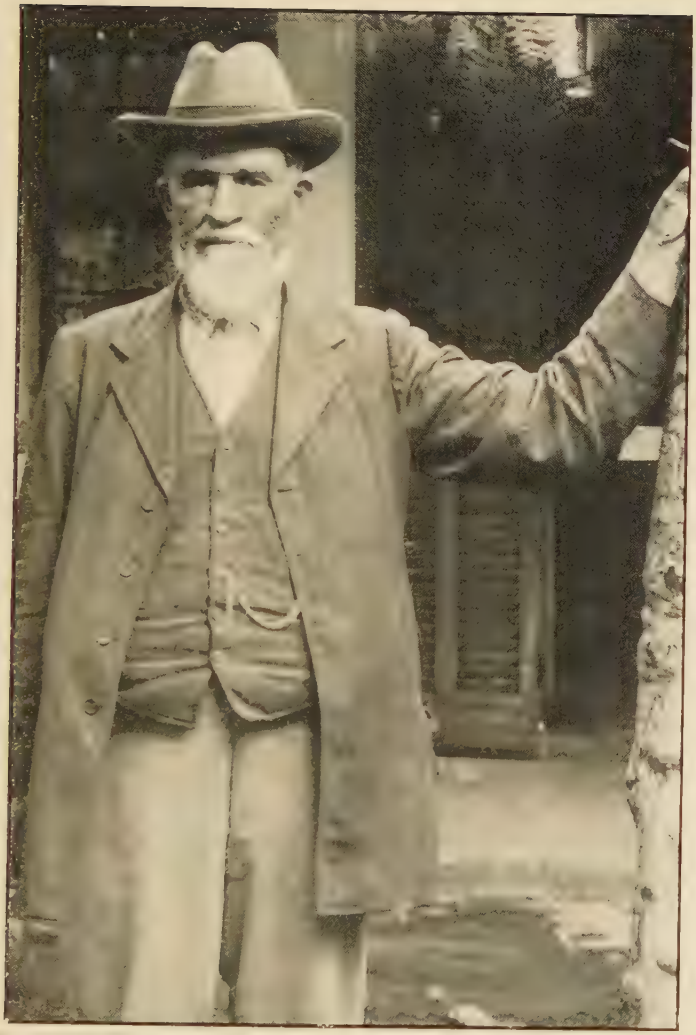
Word was sent back to Colonel Brits, who sent out

motor-cars and brought the prisoners first to Marokwen, and thence to Vryburg, whence they were removed to Johannesburg by train. De Wet seemed to treat the affair with easy nonchalance, as if, having lost the game, he did not care. He grimly remarked to his burghers—doubtless to cheer their drooping spirits—that "he would hang higher than any of them!"

In the course of conversation De Wet said it was the motor-cars that beat him. He did not believe they would be able to get through the deep sand, but they managed to hang to his heels all the time, and compelled him to maintain a speed that was killing to both man and beast.

It may be some consolation to him to know that even motor-car experts were of the same opinion, and they never believed it would be possible for them to get through such awful country. The lesson of this novel capture of the notorious old General is that, given petrol, the motor-car can beat the horse over even desert country—a useful revelation to those whose lot is cast in sandy places. The distance covered was something over 200 miles in the course of thirty-six hours. The light makes of motor-cars seem to have come through the ordeal best—Buicks, Hupmobiles, Fords, Studebakers, Standards, and Napiers.

It may be mentioned here that the motor-cars played an important part in rounding up other fugitives. A month later General "Jack" Pienaar was caught by seven cars after a chase of 300 miles over very rough and sandy country. Commandant



Christiaan de Wet.
Photographed at Vryburg after his capture.

Slabbert (an ex-Lieutenant in the 16th Mounted Rifles) also was finally run down by four motors, though he made a supreme effort to get away, and covered fifty miles in one night.

The official congratulations tendered to Captain Bullock and Captain Saker, the expert motorists in charge of the motor-car squadron column, appear to have been thoroughly well deserved.

CHAPTER XI

Beyers' last efforts—Mysterious safe-conduct—Captured by motor scout—His commando defeated—Chased by the Loyalists—Hemmed in on the Vaal River—Plunge into flooded river—" Ik kan nie meer nie "—Drowned—Recovery of the body—Buried at a farm-house—The Reitz round-up—Botha sweeps the Free State.

After Beyers was put to flight on the Vet River by Colonel-Commandant Lemmer's forces on November 7, he managed to make a discreet disappearance, and nothing was heard of him for some days. Then he swam into notice in a curious way. A Bloemfontein solicitor, Mr. Lovious, while out on patrol duty on his motor-cycle, intercepted a motor-car with four occupants. He promptly stopped the vehicle, and demanded passports. The party appeared to be embarrassed, but Mr. Lovious ascertained that one was Beyers, a second Rev. van Broekhuisen, while the third, also the chauffeur, were of the Government forces, and that they were on their way under safe-conduct to visit President Steyn at his farm Onze Rust in the vicinity of Bloemfontein. Mr. Lovious did not like the look of it, so promptly took them into custody, ordered them to drive to the nearest farm-house, where he handed them over to Captain Brink's men. Captain Brink, however, had some days previously been informed that Beyers

was to be allowed to pass to President Steyn's farm in order to have a conference with De Wet, and he therefore allowed the interesting party to proceed on their way. He informed General Smuts of the fact by telegram; but as General Smuts had, in the meantime, received information of De Wet's fighting at Winburg and the blowing up of railway lines and bridges in other parts of the Free State, he promptly sent back a wire to Captain Brink to send two men to President Steyn's farm and take Beyers back to his commando immediately. At the same time General Smuts wired ex-President Steyn of his instructions, adding that he now refused to allow Beyers to go farther and meet De Wet, as no useful result could be expected from such a meeting. The ex-President replied expressing his sorrow, stating that Beyers was quite amenable, and he believed an interview between De Wet and Beyers would help greatly towards a peaceable solution. He ended his telegram: "May God have pity upon our poor people."

Beyers was promptly sent back to his commando in a motor-car, and from that time onwards, for at least three weeks, he kept out of sight.

It might have been expected that he would attempt to escape with De Wet; but from the time of his defeat at the hands of General Botha in the Transvaal he appears to have been a beaten man, and all his movements to have been marked by irresolution. He may have been in some of the rounding-up actions that were fought in the Free State after De Wet left, but there is no evidence of it, and the first news we have of him after his long disappearance is on Friday,

December 4, when he was reported to have been with a commando under Conroy and Stead in the Lindley district, and to have left the main body accompanied by fifty men, and made off in the direction of Wonderkop near Kroonstad. He then crossed the railway line and proceeded north-westwards into the Hoopstad district.

This brings his movements up to Monday, December 7, on which date a small Government force under Commandant Sarel Du Toit engaged him on the farm Rietgat on the Zandspruit River, some fifteen miles south of Bothaville. The Government men got the worst of it, the rebels killing and wounding many of their horses and wounding two of the burghers. The rebels then split up into two parties, one going in the direction of Odendaalsrust, and the other, about thirty strong, including Beyers and Commandant Barend Celliers, of Kroonstad, fleeing towards the angle made by the junction of the Zand and Vaal Rivers. (It subsequently transpired that the men were not of Beyers' commando, but had consented to escort him into the Transvaal at his own request.)

The chase was continued by Commandant Bothma, to near the farm Klerkstroom, where the rebels succeeded in getting into some low hills, where they were lost from view for the time being. The same evening a telephone message was sent from Vliege Kraal by the post agent to Maquassi, stating that General Beyers and about twenty-five men had been seen at the farm Greyling's Request, about twenty-four miles due south of Maquassi, on the Transvaal

side of the Vaal River. This news had been brought to Mr. Jacobs (owner of the farm) by a little boy, who waded through the river. The news of a rebel party being on the farm had also reached a Mr. Harris, a storekeeper, at Commando Drift, farther up the river. At this time the Government troops were placed as follows: Captain Uys, of Viljoen's Corps, was on the Transvaal side of the river with twenty-five men; Commandant Van Rensburg was at Diepkuil, a farm situated about nine miles east of Commando Drift on the same side of the river. Captain Uys immediately despatched a messenger to Field-Cornet De Necker (Commandant Van Rensburg's commando) to come across the river to his support, while he secured a boat, swam his horses through, and left Commando Drift about eight o'clock that night for Greyling's Request.

Meanwhile Captain Cherry, who had thirty men at Maquassi, was also on the way, and a message was sent to Bloemhof to Commandant De La Rey Swarts asking him to send thirty men in the same direction, so that an enveloping movement might be carried out. After a hard night ride, Captain Uys and Field-Cornet De Necker came into touch with the rebel band at sunrise on Tuesday, the 8th, about three miles from the river, north-west from Mr. Jacobs' farm on the Free State side of the river. On the approach of the horsemen the rebels galloped furiously off in the direction of the river. Then there followed a smart bit of work on the part of the Loyalist forces, in which the ex-Commandant-General was completely beaten at his own game.

Captain Uys outflanked him on the right by a rapid manœuvre, while Field-Cornet De Necker outflanked him on the left. On the opposite side, rapidly approaching the ridge overlooking the river, were Captain Cherry and his thirty men. The situation was a desperate one for Beyers. He resolved to cross the river and take his chances with Captain Cherry's thirty men, so he gave orders to his men to take up a position behind some small bushes and fire on the advancing party. Boshoff, one of his rebel companions, assured him that it was no use attempting to cross the river in order to escape, for they were surrounded on both sides of the stream and capture was certain. Beyers made answer: "So long as I have any life in me I shall make a fight for it." These were evidently the last coherent words uttered by him. With great haste he removed his gaiters, spurs, mackintosh, and revolvers, leaped on a horse (his own had been killed), and plunged into the river, leading another animal, while one John Pietersee, who was acting as his guide, also mounted and pushed ahead of him out into the swiftly running stream. When they were well into the water, Captain Uys' men opened fire at a distance of about fifty or sixty yards, and the little spurts of water round the horsemen marked where the bullets were falling. Beyers was soon in difficulties, for his horse, instead of going straight across, swung round and round in the water, and after some ineffectual attempts to keep it straight, Beyers slipped out of the saddle, turned over on his back, and started to swim back to the Free State land, as that was much nearer. Pietersee, meanwhile,

had made good progress, but when he saw that Beyers was in difficulties, turned back to his assistance. Then, according to an eyewitness, a bullet struck him (Pietersee) and the water was streaked with blood, but he struggled gamely towards Beyers. The effort, however, was too much for him, and he suddenly disappeared. Beyers, who had been swimming on his back, was in considerable difficulty. He was heard to shout, "Ik kan nie meer nie" (I can't do any more), and a branch was thrust out towards him from the Transvaal side of the river, but it did not reach him. One of Captain Uys' men nearest him on the Free State bank shouted to ask whether he was wounded, and Beyers replied: "Ik kan nie swem nie; die jas is tussen mijn beene" (I can't swim; the coat is hampering my legs). Those watching saw him suddenly throw up his hands and drop like a stone beneath the muddy waters. That was the end.

For at least an hour and a half the troops remained on both sides of the river, but nothing was seen of the body, although a good watch was kept. Five men were left on the Free State side and four on the Transvaal side, after the troops had gone, in order to make a search, but with no success. The river had been in flood, but had gone down 8 or 10 feet; the water was still very muddy, and, strange to say, a lot of dead fish, some of them very large, were stranded on the banks.

The rest of the rebels, while Beyers was struggling across the river, quietly surrendered to Field-Cornet Dirk Bezuidenhout. Among them was the Rev.

Boshoff, who was acting as Field-Cornet; also Boshoff's brother, a man of considerable education, who only arrived at Cape Town from Europe the previous month, and, it appears, had been in Germany recently. Commandant Celliers also was taken prisoner.

Captain (now Major) Uys, who was responsible for the final rounding-up of Beyers and his little commando, has favoured the author with the following narrative of his experiences:

"He and his men crossed the flooded Vaal River two at a time, the men in a small boat and the horses swimming. It took twenty-five of them from one o'clock in the afternoon till ten o'clock in the evening to cross. He was joined by Field-Cornet Van Niekerk, and the combined force of forty-five men trekked throughout the night, soaked to the skin by the torrential rains which had been falling persistently for three or four days. At daylight on the following morning they saw about thirty rebels some 2,000 yards from the bank, just preparing to move away. The pursuing column extended and advanced. The rebels, finding they could not escape, dismounted and took up a position on the river-bank.

"Major Uys directed his men to dismount and attack on foot. The rebels opened fire at short range with dum-dum bullets. Firing continued for about fifteen minutes on both sides, the attackers steadily working their way upstream towards the rebel position. When about 250 yards away, they saw a man (they did not then know it was Beyers) with two men in the river on their horses endeavouring to swim across. Five or six others were following. The attackers

opened fire to prevent them from escaping. Shooting continued for about five minutes, and Beyers and his Adjutant, Pietersee, were observed to get out of their saddles, seize the tails of their horses, and endeavour to swim behind.

"Major Uys directed his men to cease fire as the horses in the river turned round and endeavoured to make for the bank. About thirty yards from the bank Beyers and Pietersee lost their grip of the horses' tails, and commenced calling for help. In the strong current they were being swiftly swept down the stream towards the attacking party. Major Uys ordered one of his men named Reneke to jump into the river and endeavour to aid them. Reneke removed his coat and leggings, and was about to enter the water, when the rebels again opened fire, and he was compelled to take cover. Beyers and Pietersee disappeared under the water shortly afterwards not twenty yards from the spot where Reneke, partially undressed, was prepared to go to their assistance. Reneke had previously shouted, 'Are you wounded?' to which Beyers replied: 'No, I am not wounded; but my coat is in between my legs.'

"The two men were drawn beneath the muddy waters of the Vaal, and were not again seen by the watchers on the bank. Major Uys and his men advanced towards the rebels, accepted their surrender, and, to their amazement, found that one of the drowned men was General Beyers. His water-soaked horse was on the river-bank, and strapped on the saddle was his rolled-up mackintosh, leggings, Mauser revolver, and field-glasses."

Why did Beyers say that the coat was entangled between his legs ? There can be only one explanation. At the supreme moment of peril he lost his complete grasp of events; apparently he had forgotten that he had removed his coat and strapped it upon his saddle. Why did he think that his coat was entangling his legs ?

Subsequently a man brought news to Major Uys that he had found the body of General Beyers some distance down the river. He mentioned, as a curious circumstance, that the dead man's bootlaces had become entangled, the loop of one boot having caught in the " eyelets " of the other, and his two feet were thereby fastened closely together !

His gold watch (with name engraved thereon), also his private papers, were subsequently handed to the magistrate at Wolmaranstad.

Curiously enough, the final act in the tragedy was witnessed from beginning to end by a woman. The farm-house where Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs reside is situated about fifty yards from the bank of the river, on the Transvaal side. Mrs. Jacobs, who was up early on the Tuesday morning, heard the galloping of horses, and hurried to the bank to see what was taking place. There, like a panorama, the whole scene was enacted before her eyes. From where she stood she looked down on the river, heard the sharp crack of rifles, saw two men in the water, and, to use her own words: " The shots in the water around them were just as if someone were throwing handfuls of sand in."

The banks of the river were lined with people for

Capt. 'Japie' Fourie.
Sentenced to death by court martial and shot.

Ex-Commandant-General Beyers.
Who went into rebellion and was drowned in the Vaal River.

two days. The body of Beyers was found on the 10th a short distance down the river at Vliegekraal, and medical examination showed that the body had not been hit by a bullet; death was due to drowning. Pietersee's body was recovered later, and here again, according to the medical statement, there were no marks of wounds.

Beyers' body was removed on a trolly to Vliegekraal, where it was met by a party of Pretorians, who, through an act of generosity on the part of the Government, had been conveyed from Pretoria by special train. This party included the brother of the deceased, an intimate friend on parole, Dr. Grunberger, and Predikant Neethling, of Pretoria. The party had come down, it is said, with the object of assisting in the search for the body, and had brought with them a coffin and chemicals for embalming purposes, it evidently being the intention to take the body back to Pretoria for burial.

The body was then transferred to the coffin, placed in a Government motor-car, and taken twenty miles to Maquassi, where it was seen and identified by the local Magistrate and others who had known the ex-General during his lifet me. Someone who was present reverently covered the face with a Vierkleur, the old Republican four-coloured flag remaining there and being subsequently buried with the body. It was found that the condition of the body was such that it was not advisable to proceed with the embalming, and arrangements were made for the burial at the farm of one Van Zyl, at Oersonskraal, half a mile away from Maquassi.

The wife of the deceased and a lady friend, who had also travelled from Pretoria by the special train, joined in the procession.

The spot where the body found its last resting-place was a small family graveyard about one hundred yards from the farm-house, containing three other graves and surrounded by a stone wall, which was evidently feeling the effects of time and was gradually tumbling to the ground.

A small party of about thirty gathered round the graveside, Mrs. Beyers showing great fortitude and courage. The number included a few Britishers, who stood a short distance away. The service was conducted by the Rev. Mr. Neethling, of Pretoria, and another minister, both of whom referred to the deceased as a " man of God, who always carried his Bible with him, not merely for show, but because he used it." One of the ministers opened his remarks with the words: " This is not the time for words, but for silence."

While the service was proceeding there were constant flashes of lightning and the distant rolling of thunder. It was dark when the service was concluded, and the seventeen friends and relatives who had travelled from Pretoria to be present slowly wended their way back to Maquassi, leaving a small mound with five wreaths to mark the obscure resting-place of the man who stood at one time so high in the estimation of his fellow-men and had met with such a miserable end.

There was a good deal of work yet to do before the task of clearing the Free State of rebels could be

said to be complete. The sort of semi-police work they had to do is well illustrated by the following incident:

A patrol of six men under Veld-Cornet Kunz, belonging to Commandant De Preez's commando, left Vrede on Tuesday morning in the direction of Frankfort to look for rebels in the neighbourhood. The patrol ran into about thirty or forty rebels, and retired before them. In the chase which followed, Veld-Cornet Kunz behaved in a most plucky manner, and twice dismounted to fire, killing two and wounding one of the rebels. Owing to the horses being knocked up, three of our men were captured, but were later released. None of the patrol were hit. Veld-Cornet Kunz again went out the following day with thirty men, with the object of rounding up the rebels who had chased him on the previous day.

Simultaneously with the chase of Beyers, General Botha himself was hammering the rebels with all the vigour at his command, particularly in the neighbourhood of Reitz, where they kept up their galling fire upon the armoured trains and patrols. General Botha determined to sweep the whole of the northern districts of the Free State clear of the enemy. Unfortunately torrential rains and dense fogs hampered operations for several days, but by December 5 the fog lifted and the despatch-riders brought word that all the commandoes were in their places. General Botha occupied the centre, and gave the word to advance.

The movement proved very successful. After the exchange of only a few shots, 200 rebels under

Fourie were captured by Colonel-Commandant Manie Botha.

Colonels Van Deventer, Louis Botha, Smuts, Enslin, and Commandants Naude, Dreyer, and Grobler, captured about 250 between them, and Commandant Reitz captured another 100.

Colonel-Commandant Dirk van Deventer started from Lindley for Reitz on December 1 to take part in the drive. Owing, however, to the heavy rains, which caused delays and made communication practically impossible, Colonel Van Deventer's column arrived near Reitz, where the rebel forces were concentrated, considerably ahead of the other columns which were co-operating. On the 2nd his right wing, which consisted of a few hundred men only, was attacked by an overwhelming force of rebels. Two of his men were killed, two wounded, and about 57 captured, including Commandant Kloppers, of Rustenburg. Most of the men were liberated by the rebels, but Commandant Kloppers and several of his officers were retained as prisoners. As General Botha's operations developed, however, and it became clear that the rebels were being hemmed in on all sides, Commandant Kloppers, and his few officers were released during the night of December 4. That same night about 200 rebels came to him, alone as he was, and surrendered. Commandant Kloppers took their arms from them, and gave them each a free pass to their respective Magistrates to report themselves. Under the extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed he could not very well have done anything else. They all reported, as promised.

In the attack on Colonel Van Deventer's force on December 2 the rebels lost thirty wounded. The heavy fog on the morning of the 5th enabled Wessel Wessels and Serfontein, with about 300 men, to break through the lines of Colonel Fouche, Colonel-Commandant Tobias Smuts, and Colonel-Commandant Louis Botha, in the direction of Bethlehem. Colonel Fouche succeeded, however, in capturing 70 of these. The total captures and surrenders as the result of the drive amounted to about 820. Among the prisoners were a son of Wessel Wessels and Theron, M.P.C. The drive was a fine piece of work—thirty-six hours of rain made it anything but a picnic. The rebels were not expecting such extensive and determined operations in such weather, and an extract from General Botha's report is characteristic and all-sufficing:

"It is clear that the spirit of the rebels is utterly broken, and it is almost pitiable to see them run, notwithstanding all the brave preparations for a fight made by them in the vicinity of Reitz. I am sure that the demonstration of force in these parts has practically crushed the rebellion in the Free State."

This view was justified, for the day after (that is, on the 5th) Wessel Wessels, N. W. Serfontein, M.L.A., and Van Collier, the three rebel leaders who had escaped the day before, opened negotiations for surrender. General Botha, however, demanded unconditional surrender. To this the three rebel commanders replied that they wished to consult with

other rebel leaders before laying down their arms; they stated that it was a point of honour with them not to leave their friends in the lurch, hence they desired to consult with Beyers and Kemp.

This request was at once refused, and an unconditional surrender, without further delay, was insisted upon.

The leaders, seeing that General Botha was not to be shaken from his firm attitude, decided to abandon their hopeless and futile struggle, and on the 8th Captain Wolfaard had an interview with Wessel Wessels, Van Schoor Dohne, and Bester, at which the place and time of surrender were settled. That afternoon Wessel Wessels, Serfontein, Van Collier, with their commandoes, numbering in all about 1,200 men, laid down their arms at Loskop, near the Langeberg (ten miles west of Kestell). Serfontein then proceeded to Reitz with his commando, accompanied by Captain Wolfaard, to report themselves to the local Magistrate.

Wessel Wessels and his commando were taken in charge by Colonel-Commandant Louis Botha at Tiger River Station (on the Bethlehem-Harrismith line). The other rebel commandoes, with their officers, returned to their respective districts to report themselves.

Commandant Bert Wessels also surrendered unconditionally at Odendaalsrust, with his handful of followers. Bruwer, and all his officers, surrendered the same afternoon.

CHAPTER XII

Forgive and forget "—Botha's manifesto—Botha interviewed —" The most sad experience of my life "—Fourie reappears —Plucky police patrol—Piet Grobler captured—Dingaan's Day boast—The fight at Nooitgedacht—Charge with the bayonet—A fine incident—Two Fouries captured—Escape of Pienaar—Fouries court-martialled—Fourie's remarkable speech—Sentence of death—" Japie " Fourie shot—Younger Fourie imprisoned.

THE rebellion, to all intents and purposes, was crushed, and General Botha thereupon returned to Pretoria, leaving several mobile columns in the Free State to account for the only rebel leader left there—namely, Rautenbach—and the scattered bands of rebels still remaining.

The Premier signalized his return to the capital by the issue of the following interesting manifesto:

" The Rebellion is now practically at an end; the principal leaders have disappeared through death or capture. The surrender of the principal rebel commandants in the Free State, near Bethlehem to-day, leaves in the field only small scattered bands, whose operations will require measures more of a police than a military character.

" The speedy and successful termination to what promised at one time to be a formidable and widespread rebellion, led by some of the best-known South Africans, is due in the first place to the energy and ceaseless efforts of our forces in the field, and, in the second place, to the hearty, unanimous, and un-

stinted support which all sections of the population gave the Government in this crisis.

" On behalf of myself and my colleagues, I wish to express to the people of South Africa and to our officers and men in the field the most heartfelt appreciation of their patriotic sacrifices, which have not only crushed the rebellion in its initial stages, but have united the various sections of the population as never before, and have converted a grave danger to our Union into means of cementing and establishing it more firmly.

" Our sacrifices of blood and treasure, and the losses of our population, have been considerable, but I believe they are not out of proportion to the great results already achieved and which will accrue to South Africa in the coming years.

" For this, and much more, let us be reverently thankful to Providence, which has once more guided our country through the gravest perils. And let that spirit of gratitude drive away from our minds all bitterness caused by the wrongs which have been suffered, the loss and anguish which have been caused by this senseless rebellion.

" I have noticed, latterly, a growing sense of anger and bitterness in the public mind; but let us remember that it has been a quarrel in our own South African household, that all of us will have to continue to live together in that household in future, and while we do our duty in seeing that never again shall there be a recurrence of this criminal folly, let us be on our guard against all vengeful policies and language, and cultivate a spirit of tolerance, forbearance, and merciful oblivion of the errors and misdeeds of those misguided people, many of whom took up arms against the State without any criminal intention or without any clear perception of the consequences of their action.

"While just and fair punishment should be meted out, let us also remember that now more than ever it is for the people of South Africa to practise the wise policy of forgive and forget.

"Maritz and Kemp, who were corrupted while officers in the Defence Forces, have succeeded in escaping to German South-West Africa, and from there, equipped with fresh arms and artillery, and supported by their German Allies, will seek to invade the Union. Our next duty is now to deal with this danger, and to make it impossible for German South-West Africa to be again used in future as a secure base from which to threaten the peace and liberties of the Union.

"I hope and trust the people will deal with this danger as energetically as they have crushed the internal rebellion."

This statement by General Botha led to considerable criticism by the Loyalist, particularly the British, section, who read into it the first symptoms of a general amnesty, a "let's-kiss-and-be-friends-all-round" sort of attitude. However, after several days of caustic, not to say somewhat bitter, criticism, General Botha permitted himself to be interviewed by a news agency representative, to whom he defined the Government attitude as one of rigid justice and punishment for the leaders, who would take their trial before the Courts of Law; but for the rank and file, many of whom had been led into the mad adventure without understanding the seriousness of their actions, he urged that they should not be treated too harshly.

General Botha also pleaded with the English-speaking section of the community not to continue

their denunciation of the rebels, as they might in so doing wound the feelings of the loyal Dutch. Said General Botha:

"Not many years ago they and the rebels were fighting side by side against England. For the Loyalist Boers in these latter days it has been an unhappy, indeed tragic, ordeal to have to hunt down and fire upon men, some of them relatives, many of them their friends, who were once their comrades-in-arms. These men in many cases have already met with their just punishment. Their wrongdoing and their fate are matters of most acute grief to their kinsmen, and bitterness may unwittingly be provoked if our English fellow-countrymen continually emphasize the acts which they are not alone in detesting. The Dutch Loyalists have discharged a painful duty out of a stern sense of honour, and, having relatives and friends often among the rebels, they regard the whole rebellion as a lamentable business upon which the curtain should be rung down with as little declamation, as little controversy, and as little recrimination as possible. For myself, personally, the last three months have provided the most sad experience of all my life. I can say the same for General Smuts, and, indeed, for every member of the Government. The war—our South African War—is but a thing of yesterday. You will understand my feelings and the feelings of the loyal commandoes when among the rebel dead and wounded we found from time to time men who had fought in our ranks during the dark days of that campaign."

While General Botha was administering the *coup de grâce* to the rebellion in the Free State, it must not be imagined that the trouble was over in the

Transvaal. Far from it. It was not likely that Fourie, after his repulse of the Government forces at Haman's Kraal, would calmly subside, especially as he knew that his offence as an officer of the Defence Force was more than rebellion. Adopting his old tactics of disappearing into thick country and emerging at unexpected places to strike a swift and dramatic blow, we next find him about sixty miles north-east of the Premier Diamond Mine. If he intended to make a raid on the mine he was sadly disappointed, for a strong mobile column moved out against him in the early days of December, under Lieutenant-Colonel N. J. Pretorius, rushed the rebel laager, captured everything it contained, killed three rebels, captured thirty, and dispersed the others in all directions. "General" Jack Pienaar and "Japie" Fourie, accompanied by one other rebel (probably Fourie's younger brother), fled through the bush to the north in the direction of Potgietersrust, closely pursued for a considerable distance, but managed to make good their escape in the Nylstroom district.

A few days later (on December 5) Fourie made his appearance, this time near Warmbaths, surprising a patrol of eight men on the farm De Putten. The surprise was effected by treachery on the part of the rebels, some of whom wore white armlets (the badge of the loyalists), while others wore uniforms. The advancing party of about forty men were approached by a trooper sent out to ascertain their identity. He was informed that they were a rebel commando under Fourie, and Fourie ordered him to return to his party, and to tell them that the rebels gave them

ten minutes to surrender. Then followed a bad piece of work, for before the trooper could get back to his comrades the rebels opened fire. Sergeant Begbie, who was in charge of the patrol, promptly showed fight, and drew his men to the shelter of a small store, where they put up a grand fight and kept the rebels back for over an hour. By that time the rebels had had enough, and retired carrying with them their wounded. The patrol lost one man killed, and one had a broken collar-bone due to a fall from his horse. It is pleasing to know that the Minister of Defence specially complimented the little band on their heroic conduct.

At this juncture mention must be made of the operations of Colonel-Commandant Mentz, who had succeeded in locating another considerable commando of rebels in the adjoining Rustenburg district, about ten miles north-west of the town. The rebels were in a strong position among some ridges, and fought stubbornly, but after five hours' fighting were dislodged, one of their Field-Cornets (Smit) being among the killed. Most important of all were the captures, for in the "bag" of eighty-one were found Commandant P. Muller and the very-much-wanted Commandant Piet Grobler, Member of the Legislative Assembly, and one of the leaders of the rebellion, whose truculence just before the trouble started already has been referred to. The remainder of the rebels got away into the rough hilly country, and apparently some of them effected a junction with Fourie, who, after his affair with the police patrol, worked his way towards Rustenburg.

Nothing, apparently, could shake the confidence of Fourie in his obsession that he could overthrow the Government and occupy Pretoria. He gradually got together another commando (including a few from Pretoria), and let it be known to a select few that he would enter Pretoria on Dingaan's Day. Now, Dingaan's Day is a very solemn holiday in the Boer chronology, for it marks the great day in the history of the older inhabitants when, under Pretorius, the Boers smashed Dingaan, the Zulu King, and broke the Zulu power for ever. It has always been regarded as a day of deliverance, of the starting-point of freedom. Was it not, indeed, the solemn day upon which, in the year 1880, the triumvirate, S. J. Paul Kruger, M. W. Pretorius, and Pieter J. Joubert hoisted the flag of the Republic ? Therefore a day upon which to do great deeds for freedom. The rump of the rebels, true to tradition, let it be known that they would strike the blow for freedom on that day. But the Government had similar views, though their idea of striking a blow for " freedom " was not quite the same as that of the rebels.

Colonel N. J. Pretorius was sent to strike the blow with his own column of S.A.M.R. and police under Major Trew. They left Pretoria on the evening of December 15 by train to De Wildt Station, to the west of the capital. They detrained, and at midnight trekked towards Blaaubank—that beautiful country amid the Magaliesburg where the famous Rustenburg tobacco and oranges are grown. The column arrived at daybreak, and a patrol soon afterwards returned with the news that Fourie and the

rebel commando had left the farm Veekraal the previous morning. The spoor was picked up and followed by the columns towards Pietersburg railway line, and by four o'clock in the afternoon it was ascertained that the rebel laager was on Nooitgedacht —a spot made familiar by name during the late war as a scene of the disaster to General Clements' column, when his camp was surprised and captured by Beyers.

The rebels were believed to be located in a shallow depression in the shape of a horseshoe, with the points downwards. Running across the bottom of the horseshoe, from left to right, is a river-bed, and running from this river up between the points of the horseshoe is a deep donga (dry watercourse), splitting up into a number of spruits (ditches) towards its upper end. The country all around is what might be called open bush—bushes ten and twelve feet high, but sufficiently wide apart to render progress quite easy—in other words, park-like country with natural avenues. Colonel Pretorius advanced towards the points of the horseshoe with the bulk of the Defence Force men. They advanced in two columns, and occupied positions on both sides of the entrance to the donga.

Meantime Major Trew was sent with the S.A.M.R. and Police (all mounted) round the left-hand side of the horseshoe, on the sloping ground, in order to envelop the whole position. They were advancing through the bush on the left and were nearing the turn at the top when out ripped a volley at them at close range from their right. There was not a soul to be seen, and the men were chatting and wondering

A Lucky Escape.

At the Nooichtgedacht fight on December 10th, 1914, a bullet pierced the holster of Head-Constable Bench, S.A.P., at A, struck the revolver at E, exploded one cartridge C, loosening the bullets of two remaining cartridges D D without exploding them, and emerged from the holster at E.

whether this was going to be another futile day, when the bullets put a sudden end to their discourse. It was a complete surprise, and was very nearly a disaster. The rebels were lying in the central donga and in the radiating spruits, and they had fairly caught the loyalists on the flank with a wicked enfilading fire. Promptly the men sprang from their horses, extended themselves more particularly round the top curve of the horseshoe, and gradually closed in, firing every time they caught a glimpse of the setting sun along the foresight of a rebel gun. In such a donga the enemy was perfectly entrenched, and in ordinary circumstances nothing but a field-gun with good store of shrapnel would have moved them. But Fourie was in the bag, and the Government men meant to have him. As the Police and S.A.M.R. worked round the top side so as to get at the rebels from the end of the donga they were met by a cross-fire from the opposite slope, where "General" Pienaar had taken up a position with two or three men, and kept up a galling fire.

The Defence Force men at the entrance to the donga were not idle, and shot at everything they could see; unfortunately, there was little to see except an occasional flash. This deadly game of potting went on for nearly three hours, with all the advantage to the rebels, but the Government forces gradually wriggled closer and closer, and just about eight o'clock, when it was almost dark, the signal was given, and the Government men rushed forward from both ends. The rebels were waiting, however, and their shots rang out with deadly precision; men dropped all over

the place, but nothing could check their gallant rush. The rebels continued firing until the loyalists were within five feet of them, and some of the killed and injured men even had their clothing burned by the flash, but before the loyalists were actually among them they put up their hands. The rush, however, had been so rapid, and the Government men had been so enraged at the awful wounds inflicted by the dum-dum bullets used by the rebels, that they could not restrain their impetuosity, and some were in the donga and at work with the bayonet before they could be restrained. It is doubtful if they even heard the " Cease fire."

The two Fouries were among the prisoners, and the bag was complete with the exception of Pienaar, who, being away from the main body, managed to escape unobserved at a fairly early stage of the proceedings, when the S.A.M.R. and Police began to draw in their cordon. (He was captured about a month later.) The losses on the Government side were ten killed and twenty-one wounded. Among the killed was Lieutenant Goetz, of Potchefstroom (Defence Force), who displayed conspicuous gallantry.

There was one fine incident that deserves to be placed on record. One of the Government men was shot, and fell badly wounded. He saw his comrades making efforts to come to his assistance—this was some time before the final rush—but he called out: " Don't worry about me. I'm done for. I don't want anybody to lose their life for me." It was a thoughtful act, for he remembered what Fourie's men had done to Poor Allan King at Haman's Kraal.

Thus ended Fourie's boast that he would enter Pretoria on Dingaan's Day. He did enter next day, but as a prisoner. The day following he and his brother were brought before a court-martial sitting at the Police-Station, and charged:

"That, being officers of the Union Defence Forces, they were charged with treason in that they in the Transvaal on or about the months of November and December, 1914, and specially on or about the 16th December, 1914, in or near the district of Pretoria, did resist His Majesty's Forces, and were found and captured, together with other persons, in armed rebellion on or about the 16th December, 1914."

The elder Fourie pleaded "Not guilty" and the younger one "Guilty." The evidence was brief and to the point. Evidence was given as to the appointment of both prisoners as officers in the Defence Force, and to their participation in attacks upon the Government forces at various times and places. There was nothing very new in the evidence, except that when the attack took place on Greyling's Post the elder Fourie said they were going to "knock hell out of the Botha Government"—and then stole horses, saddles, etc. Also it was proved that in the final fight at Nooitgedacht, after the surrender, the elder Fourie expressed his regret that he had shot so many men of the Defence Force (burghers): he would prefer to have shot the South African Police or the South African Mounted Rifles!

At the conclusion of the evidence the prisoners were asked if they had anything to say. The elder

prisoner, "Japie" Fourie, speaking in Dutch, then made the following remarkable statement:

"Mr. President and Members of the Court, the reason why I went into armed resistance against the British troops I will explain. I was born in the Transvaal under the Republican flag. In the last war I fought against the English until I was severely wounded and taken into hospital. When captured I was pointed at by English officers with revolvers as a 'bastard,' which did not cause me to have good feeling towards the English people. These feelings I kept to myself, with the hope that we would be brothers together in South Africa. This state of affairs continued some years, and my experience was that whenever they got an opportunity of hurting the feelings of the South African people they did so. And God knows it often hurt me to the core of my heart, and I challenge any Englishman, should that happen to them, to stand under another nation, and when their feelings are hurt in this manner, to say I have committed a sin. I do not speak of the talking Englishman, but of the English gentleman.

"When a short time ago there was a question of war against German South-West Africa, I was one of those who did not kick up a row against it; nevertheless, I was against it, because I could not see why our Government should declare war against Germany, which never yet did us harm; and I cannot see why any Africander lives should be offered to the benefit of or to uphold the honour of England. The Africanders owe very little to Great Britain. I take the days of Slachter's Nek, and the days of the murder at Bloed River in Natal, and take the murder committed on our people at Piet Retief by natives under English officers, and I think of the thirty thousand women and children murdered in the concentration

camps, and I do not see why we should uphold the honour of England. I challenge any man to point his finger at me and say, 'You have committed wrong.' I know that the Government that was over me and that is over me to-day looks on me as a rebel and is disappointed in me. But I too am disappointed in the Government, which I put there as the sacrifice of my blood. There is talk of 'equal rights.' Go to the gaol and take an ordinary receipt for a pipe" (holding out a printed form of receipt), "and see if there is a single Dutch word on it. Where are the equal rights?

"On October 10th last I went to a concert in the Opera House, Pretoria, a concert that was given in memory of our late President, whose birthday it was, and instead of hearing music and an address on the life of the President, I heard dirty abuse and accusations, and while the minister opened the proceedings with prayer, "Rule, Britannia!" was forced down our throats with sticks, and ladies were hit with rotten eggs on the platform. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, if this is British fair play and equality, then I do not want to live under it; it is a greater honour to stand here as a prisoner than as an officer in the English army. What I have done I have done with open eyes and under my free conviction. I am convinced to-day that God will not support the unjust, and that there are still people enough in the veld to rescue South Africa. As to my brother, under my orders and instructions he has done as he has done, and I will ask the Court to say he acted under my influence, and he is still young. He is my youngest brother, and he believes in me. And to-day, if these Africanders in the court would speak out their hearts as I do and are no hypocrites, then they can utter no other words than those I am uttering now. I cannot be false; I never could be in my life, and God forbid

I should ever become so. My deeds always showed my heart. I am not asking the Court for mercy—the mercy of God Who led me is enough—but I ask the Court to treat mercifully the men who acted under me. My influence with them was strong. That is all I have to say."

An eloquent appeal was made by the advocate for the prisoners, and the Court at once adjourned, the President announcing that the Court would consider its verdict in private. So far as the public were concerned, this was the end; but that same Saturday evening certain men of the S.A.M.R., the Police, and Fourie's own regiment (Botha Ruiters), were ordered to be ready at daybreak to form a firing-party. For the verdict of the Court was that the elder Fourie was to be shot at daybreak. Sentence of death also had been passed upon the other prisoner, but was commuted to five years' hard labour.

There is no need to linger long over the details of the last hours of this misguided man. He was permitted to bid farewell to his wife and relatives, and then spent the remainder of the night with his minister, the Rev. Neethling. At dawn (five o'clock) the word was given to him to prepare for instant execution. He walked firmly to his place in the prison yard, and sat in the chair that had been placed against a wall. The firing-party took their places, and at that moment the Rev. Neethling commenced to intone Psalm xc., in which he was joined by the prisoner, to whom it appeared to be familiar:

"Lord, Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another."

The officer's sharp words of command rang out, the twelve rifles were levelled, and with the volley that followed, the history of "Japie" Fourie came to an end.

The only comment to be made is that he was one of those implacable men whose hatred of the British had grown to be a disease. A man who on the very brink of the grave could find a grievance justifying rebellion in the fact that a prison receipt slip for his pipe was printed in English only, and not in both English and Dutch, surely cannot be said to be normal? Apparently he saw in everything that went on around him further proofs of this "tyranny" of the English.

De Wet suffered from a similar malady, proved by the fact that he made a grievance justifying rebellion in the fact that he had once been fined five shillings —after he had pleaded guilty—for sjamboking a Kaffir boy! Verily the mental processes of your true patriot pass the wit of man to understand!

It is futile arguing with a dead man, but as there may be many readers of this book who are not well acquainted with the other historical incidents referred to by Fourie in his speech, a few notes are appended at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER XIII

The casualties—And prisoners—Special sedition and treason courts—Loyalists given a holiday—Reassemble for German expedition—What the rebellion accomplished—The moment of success.

Up to the time of writing the Government has not allowed it to be known how many men were in the field on the Government side, but we shall probably not be far wrong if we put the number down at between 60,000 and 70,000. The rebels had well over 10,000 men under their banner. Of these 5,729 were captured, 2,054 surrendered before the date of the amnesty proclamation (November 21), and 1,831 afterwards. There were also many burghers who joined under a misapprehension, and promptly retired when they discovered the real situation.

It is not possible to ascertain the exact rebel losses, but the estimate of the Minister of Defence is that they lost at least 1,000 in killed and wounded.

On the Government side 130 men were killed and 272 wounded.

Among the captured and surrendered rebels were 293 officers, subsequently brought to trial before the special courts appointed for that purpose.

Little more remains to be said. At the time of writing (January, 1915) special sedition courts are

being held for the purpose of trying offenders, and Magistrates are holding preliminary examinations in connection with the charges of treason, etc., against the rebel officers and leaders, so that they will not actually be placed upon their trial for some months.

The loyal commandoes finished their work shortly before Christmas, and were given three weeks' holiday to visit their homes, get some much-needed work attended to, and prepare for the big task in front of them of turning the Germans out of German South-West.

Towards the end of January big commandoes assembled at convenient concentration camps, and very hard and fit they looked, for rebel hunting is undoubtedly the finest thing in the world for making men fit. Here again the Germans entirely miscalculated the effect of their machinations. If they had not stirred up this rebellion they would have been invaded by raw and more or less amateur troops. As it is, the South Africans have rubbed off their rough corners, polished up their military training, learned to march and gallop long distances without turning a hair, and altogether make themselves just about twice as useful as they were when the operations against the rebels compelled them to suspend operations against the Germans. The Germans, therefore, are likely to reap the reward of their interference !

On this subject one more word needs to be said. The raids into Union territory by Maritz and Kemp with strong forces of Boers and Germans led the Government to the logical conclusion to exercise

their rights to call out the National Reserve—in other words, all men capable of bearing arms. The Government put forward the very reasonable argument that it was not fair that a certain few men who had volunteered should bear the whole brunt of beating back the enemy out of Union territory and removing the menace from Union frontiers. In such national duty all should bear their part. It is interesting to note that this order applied to the whole of the Transvaal excepting the Witwatersrand, to the whole of the Free State, and to the northern and north-western portions of the Cape Colony. In other words, the Government shrewdly took unto themselves power to put the test upon every man in the rebel districts. If a man responded to the order to turn out to fight, well and good; if he refused, if he happened to be troubled with conscientious objections and wished to play the part of passive resister or protesting burgher, it was far better for the welfare of the community in general that he should do his resisting or protesting inside a barbed-wire fence generally known as a camp of internment. Here they were left to meditate. Some of them soon got tired of this inglorious inactivity, and after cogitating for a week or two came to the sensible conclusion that a little active service was preferable to staying all the summer under the watchful eye of a sentry. Those who remained obdurate were sent to the front to do trench-digging and navvy work at nothing a day.

Thus ended the great "Five Shilling Rebellion." It achieved neither of the objects of its originators.

It did not succeed in overthrowing General Botha and General Smuts; it did not succeed in establishing a new Republic; it did not succeed in preventing the Union Government forces from invading German South-West Africa. All it did was to delay that big military operation for three months, greatly to the advantage of the Union forces. It brought death, wounds, and obloquy to the leaders, and much distress and punishment to their deluded followers. Never was rebellion so badly planned, and so hopeless from the very beginning. There was only one moment when it had a chance of success, and that moment passed for ever when by some marvellous chance a policeman's ricochet bullet struck down Delarey on that tragic September evening. If Delarey had lived and had gone into rebellion, the problem would have been far different. Many who would have followed him saw in that tragedy the finger of warning, and they refrained. We can afford to deride the vapourings of "prophets," but few of us care to dispute the argument of sudden death. The Dutchman is of a deeply religious nature, and he needed no outsider to point the moral. Happy for those to-day who read that lesson aright, and profited by it!

Now that the sad business is over, and only a crop of memories remains, that incident of Delarey and the bullet constantly recurs to thousands of South Africans who, knowing now how near the country was to black disaster, and how it was averted by the merest chance, wonder whether, after all, there is a Providence that doth shape our ends.

During the first week in February Kemp and Bezuidenhout and the "prophet" Van Rensburg, who had escaped to German South-West, surrendered with something like 1,000 men to Colonel Deventer, and reported that Maritz' men were coming in in small parties. Kemp also was sick, said the Boers, could not get on with the Germans, and had come to the conclusion, after sampling German hospitality, that they would prefer to be under the British flag after all!

CHAPTER XIV

The South-West Campaign—Organizing for victory—Great desert treks — Wonderful marching — Sledge-hammer blows—Rout of the Germans—Release of Union prisoners —Surrender—Return of the victor—Sentences on rebels.

WHILE this volume is in the Press there is just time to record the successful termination of the Union operations in what was once known as German South-West. As a result of General Botha's strategy a country as large as Germany has been added to the British Empire. General Botha personally took the field with the northern force operating from Swakopmund, and was Commander-in-Chief of the combined operations. The column under him landed at Walvis Bay, drove the enemy from Swakopmund, and then settled down grimly to a desert campaign. They were splendidly helped by an extraordinary incident. The Swakop River, which had been dry for eight years, came down in flood, and thereby provided all the water needed. General Botha's men pushed the enemy back mile by mile over a sandy, waterless strip of country nearly a hundred miles in width, and defeated him at Riet, Pforteberg, Trekkoppies, Jakls-water, and then drove him headlong from Karibib, which town practically constituted the key to the position so far as the final blow at the capital, Windhuk, was concerned.

Meanwhile, another column pushed in from Luderitzbucht, toiled against sand-storms, torrid heat, thirst, poisonous insects, poisoned wells, bombs from "Fritz" the aviator, and mines, until they reached Garub, where for the first time they were able to obtain natural water. Up to this point every drop they had to drink had been condensed from sea-water at Luderitzbucht, and toilsomely hauled over the desert sands to the thirsty men, horses, and mules a hundred miles inland. This capture of the water-holes at Garub constituted the pivotal point in the operations. The enemy thought the Union forces could never cross the desert sands in sufficient force to drive them out at this spot. But the Union forces were determined to get the water-holes at Garub, and get them they did, despite all obstacles, natural and otherwise.

The moment the supply of water for a big body of men had been assured, a huge force, including a number of 4·7 guns, was moved up from the coast and concentrated at Garub, which, by the way, is on the edge of the desert, and only a few miles ahead the highlands commence. It was here the enemy intended to make his stand, for the Nek of Aus—a tremendously strong position—had been prepared and fortified, with trenches cut in the solid rock and sangars on either side the Pass. A cleverly executed flanking movement prevented him from carrying out his intention to blow the Union troops into little pieces. He fell back, and the dreaded Nek of Aus passed into the hands of the Union men. A few casualties from mines, poisoned water at Aus, and

some other small items of the same kind went with the occupation.

All this time there had been concentrating secretly at various spots on the Union side at least four powerful columns, consisting for the most part of the wiry Union mounted men. One column left Kuruman, and executed a most wonderful march across the Kalahari Desert. To give an idea of the sort of work performed, the 5th S.A.M.R. (Permanent Force) trekked from Kimberley to Keetmanshoop, a distance of over 700 miles, and nearly all desolate country, with practically no grazing, and very little water. There was one stretch of 125 miles through white limestone sand, as fine as flour, without a single drop of water to be found. Such water as the men had, had to be carried by motor-cars. The horses had none. The only " moisture " the poor beasts got was by chewing dead thorn-bushes. It was pitiful to see so many animals give in, but the route had to be covered, and covered it was, though when the column arrived at Witdraai, having covered 200 miles in twenty-one days, there was not a spare horse left; those that were left were wrecks.

A glance at the map will show that this column was driving in directly from the east, making a bee-line for the German central railway system at Keetmanshoop. Three other columns pushed in from the south-east and south, one from Upington—to which spot a military railway had been laid with almost incredible speed, and the Orange River spanned with a temporary bridge 3,000 feet in length—and others from points farther south. At the given moment they were

all launched at the enemy, who, finding himself menaced on all sides, precipitately retreated. The column that had gone through the Kalahari Desert with such remarkable speed missed the enemy by only a few hours, though in time to seize a vast amount of rolling-stock and a little "Woolwich Arsenal" perfectly fitted up with machine tools and all appliances for turning out the equipment for a very respectable army.

But the column that had taken Aus was also on the move. Leaving the railway, and cutting across country through Bethany and Beerseba, it came up with the fleeing enemy at Gibeon, and gave him a bad time. The enemy continued his headlong flight towards Windhuk. Nor did he stay there, for General Botha was moving in to intercept him, if possible. The enemy chose the wiser part, and fled right into the mountainous northern territory, leaving his capital at the mercy of the Union forces. General Botha received the surrender of the Burgomeister a few miles outside the city, which he entered an hour later, and the Union Jack was hoisted over the Rathaus.

Thus ends the second phase of the campaign. The third commenced a few weeks later, when the forces gathered together in the north, with Walvis as the base. When all was ripe, a great combined movement was again carried out. Aviators accompanied the central army under General Botha, and with each of the other columns was a complete wireless installation. While General Botha, with his screen of mounted men and a magnificent force of infantrymen, big and little guns, trekked alongside the rail-

Hoisting the Union Jack over the Rathaus at Windhuk.

way, the burgher columns swept out right and left. These long arms crept through bush, over mountains, through sandy wastes, talking to each other every night by wireless, and every day from dawn to dark pushing their inexorable way round the two flanks of the unsuspecting enemy.

He had prepared to fight at Kalkfeld, but he ran as soon as he saw the aviators and felt their bombs. He had a scheme, a splendid scheme, a real German scheme. He had made ready a wonderful trap into which he was going to lure General Botha and the Union forces, and blow him to pieces. There was no doubt about it, for German guards told the British prisoners what was going to happen ! General Botha must come into the Sarg Berg by one certain route, and there something frightful was waiting for him. The scheme was excellent. From a military point of view nothing could have been more perfect. The mines were laid, trenches dug, guns in position, everything as complete as the heart of a German could wish it—only General Botha did not walk into the trap.

Our aviators flew over the enemy, dropped bombs upon him, and while his attention was thus being occupied the swift mounted squadrons on the flanks, accompanied by field-guns, had done their work. Brigadier-General Myburgh had reached Tsumeb, and Brigadier-General Brits—after a tremendous march of nearly 400 miles through Outjo and the desert wastes of Okaukuejo, thence skirting the great Utoscha swamp—arrived at Namutoni (the mysterious fortress a hundred miles beyond railhead), released the Union officers, and got well in the rear of

the enemy. There was only one thing for the enemy to do—to make a stand and fight or surrender.

He chose the latter. General Botha received the surrender of Colonel Francke at Kilo 500 (a few miles outside Otavi). It is rather amusing to learn that when they met Colonel Francke said: " Of course, I cannot recognize you as a General. Generals are only made in Germany. Shall I call you Mr. Botha, or what ?" General Botha replied: " Don't worry about my rank. That makes no difference to my terms. They are, ' *Unconditional surrender.*' "

At a later stage, doubtless, some other writer will do the fuller justice that such a campaign deserves. For swift action against almost insuperable difficulties it probably never has been equalled. It has been very properly described as " Botha's Marathon." It is remarkable that the campaign was carried to such a successful conclusion at so little cost of human life. It was not the fault of the enemy, for he showed remarkable ingenuity in preparing devilish land-mines and other horrible methods of warfare.

No less than 6,000 mines were discovered by the Union troops, and it is remarkable that only six men lost their lives by these means. The escapes were miraculous; beyond belief. On one occasion a man on horseback was blown into the air. The horse was blown into two parts, which were found a hundred yards apart. The man himself was found at the top of a high tree, unhurt. Columns of men passed over mines, which were subsequently discovered. The wheel-tracks showed that they had been within inches of the pin which, if struck, would have caused horrible

losses. What is one to think of the influences at work that prevented General Botha, his Staff, and body-guard from being blown into eternity ? They actually passed over a huge mine of something like 140 yards long. They did not know it, and it was only when a stray horse behind them stepped on the pin, and a veritable crater of fire was opened behind them, that they realized what had happened. Was it luck ?

More poisonous sheep-dip was used by the enemy in poisoning wells than would be required to dip all the sheep in the Union of South Africa; yet by some strange fortune not a single man lost his life through poisoned water.

A quotation from General Botha's own lips will perhaps best explain the attitude of mind of those who went through the campaign:

" When you consider the hardships and dangers we met, the lack of water, poisoned wells, and land-mines, and how wonderfully we were spared, you must realize and believe that God's hand protected us. Think of the wonderful way we escaped the mines. Always we found some little indications of their presence—bits of paper or disturbed earth which helped us to avoid death. Consider how the Swakop River, which had been dry for eight years, came down in flood, and gave us a plentiful supply of water. All these are signs of the help of the Almighty, and it is due to His intervention that we are safe to-day."

A quotation from General Smuts may not be amiss:

" Our defence organization was still in its infancy when the storm burst on the world. We made bricks

without straw. Without experts, without a Staff, we struggled along, and struggled successfully."

Did Briton and Boer fight shoulder to shoulder, and did they share the burden equally ? Well, as to that, 126 men with English names fell, and 127 with Dutch names.

A few words more to conclude this brief history of South Africa's year of stress. Almost on the anniversary of the day General Botha declared his intention to keep to the path of duty and honour he was welcomed back to the garlanded capital, and in the classic forum of the noble Union buildings at Pretoria was thanked by the grateful loyalists of South Africa for his splendid work for the South African nation and the Empire.

It was the cold irony of Fate that the city was full of visitors from the far-away districts of the Transvaal, who were there giving evidence before the Supreme Court in the cases of sedition and treason against the rebel leaders.

In connection with De Wet, it should be added that General Smuts in the witness-box voluntarily made the statement that there was no evidence whatever to show that General De Wet was connected with any German plot.

With regard to Maritz an awkward situation has arisen. It appears that he did not die from wounds, as previously reported, but served with the Germans throughout a portion at least of the campaign. Finding the Union troops were continuing their victorious career, he fled northwards through the desolate desert-land north of Namutoni over the Cunene River into

Col. Francke (on right) surrendering to General Botha.

the Portuguese territory of Angolaland. There he was arrested by the Portuguese authorities, and at the time of writing is still in their custody. The British Imperial Government is not anxious to claim him, and the South African Union Government similarly is disinclined to call for his extradition. The Portuguese Government would be glad to get rid of him. It is an extraordinary situation for the maker of treaties—an Ishmael and an outlaw.

It is now established beyond question that Maritz sent an emissary to the German authorities as far back as 1913, and that the Kaiser was well aware of the treachery contemplated. The following telegram from the Kaiser to the Governor of German South-West has been discovered:

"I shall not only recognize the independence of South Africa, but will even guarantee it provided the rebellion is started immediately."

APPENDIX A

PROCLAMATION BY MARITZ

To the People of South Africa.

Whereas the peace concluded at Vereeniging in 1902 was in conflict with the real wishes of the South African people, and we were compelled to submission against our desire because our women and children were being systematically done to death by the enemy in the concentration camps, through which the nation incurred the danger of being completely destroyed;

Whereas the ideal of a free South Africa under their own flag is still cherished by our people, and we firmly believe and cherish the holy conviction that Providence, which controls the destinies of peoples as well as persons, planted our pious and brave forefathers in this sunny land to make of us, their descendants, a free and independent people;

Whereas the Imperial Government has, on more than one occasion since the last war, again broken faith with the South African people, by, for example, paying out the three million pounds, which was intended for burghers who had not placed themselves under protection of the enemy, to persons who had no right to it, and further (because) both the English Government and the jingo section in England have continually brought pressure to bear on the Union

Government, contrary to promises made, to extinguish and suppress the national aspirations of our people and to place the interests of the Empire above those of South Africa;

Whereas the Imperial Government finally went so far as to induce the Union Government to attempt, against the will and desire of the vast majority of our people, to conquer German South-West Africa, and the Union Government by means of false and deceitful representations persuaded Parliament to approve of the said war;

Whereas the people have protested against the said war, at first by passive resistance and later arms in hand, and the Union Government, instead of giving ear to this, set one section of the people in arms against the other, by means of untrue and misleading assertions, through which many sons of our land have already lost their lives;

Whereas the people has exhausted all constitutional means of inducing the Union Government to refrain from the aforesaid war, and therefore no other way remains open to the people than to shake off the British yoke;

Now, therefore, I, Solomon Gerhardus Maritz, Commandant-General of the Republican forces in the Cape Province, by consent of the Provisional Government, proclaim and determine as follows:

That the former South African Republic and Orange Free State, as well as the Cape Province and Natal, are declared free of British authority and independent, and every white inhabitant of the aforesaid territories, of whatever nationality, is

hereby called upon to aid, arms in hand, in the establishment of the long-cherished ideal of a free and independent South Africa.

If the people obey this call unanimously the object can be attained without bloodshed; on the other hand, if there is disunion the struggle may possibly be long and bloody. Hence it is necessary for every one to take up arms in order to attain what God has afore-ordained for our people and what He now places within our reach.

The property and goods of those who stand on our side will be respected and protected in every possible way, and all commandeered property and animals will be paid for as soon as possible after the war.

All financial liabilities of whatsoever character are suspended until three months after the war, and acknowledgments of indebtedness of this kind, etc., will bear no interest during the war.

The payment of repatriation debts is likewise suspended, and as soon as possible after the war the whole question will be reopened, with the object of finding a more just and fair solution.

Several cases are known where the enemy has armed natives and coloured people to fight against us, and as this tends to arouse contempt among the black nations for the white, an emphatic warning is issued that all coloured people and natives who are captured with arms, as well as their officers, will be made to pay the penalty with their lives.

I proclaim and make known further that prisoners of war taken from the enemy, who when captured are not wearing proper uniforms which can be distin-

guished from civilian dress, will be dealt with according to the usages of war.

That we shall take revenge if it appears that our burghers or officers, who may fall into the hands of the enemy, are not treated in accordance with the laws of civilized warfare.

On several occasions of late it appears that the enemy has made use of explosive bullets, and I wish to protest emphatically against so barbarous a manner of carrying on war. Any of the enemy found in possession of such cartridges will be treated according to the laws of war.

Of late the enemy has on more than one occasion abused the white flag; against this also a warning is issued.

As the enemy threatens to confiscate the property of burghers fighting on the Republican side, it is hereby notified that such confiscation is unlawful and will not be recognized.

Finally it is notified for general information that the following persons have been chosen as a Provisional Government to act in the name of the people, until other arrangements can be made:

C. F. Beyers, Commandant-General for the Transvaal;

C. R. De Wet, Commandant-General for the Orange Free State;

S. G. Maritz, Commandant-General for the Cape Province;

J. C. J. Kemp, Assistant Commandant-General for the Transvaal;

A. P. J. Bezuidenhout, "Vegt-generaal"; and Commandant Kampher.

This Proclamation must be considered as applying to the Transvaal and the Orange Free States as well as to the Cape Province and Natal, in so far as the contents are not in conflict with proclamations and notices already issued by the Provisional Government or Republican Generals.

GOD SAVE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

Given under my hand in the field, this 16th day of December, in the year of our Lord One thousand Nine hundred and Fourteen.

S. G. MARITZ.

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GENERAL BOTHA AND PRESIDENT STEYN, DEALING WITH THEIR EFFORTS TO OBVIATE BLOODSHED

1.

General Botha to President Steyn.

ONZE RUST,
11*th October*, 1914.

REGRET to have to inform you that Maritz has committed treason, and has joined enemy with majority of officers and men. He has arrested those who declined to join and sent them to German West Africa. He has with him a force of the enemy near Kakamas, and yesterday sent Government an ultimatum in which he threatens to invade Cape Province further unless by ten o'clock this morning it is agreed to allow General De Wet, Hertzog, Beyers, Kemp, and Muller to meet him at his headquarters to give him instructions. Government has ignored ultimatum, but taken strong steps to deal with situation. For this purpose Martial Law is being proclaimed to-morrow and burghers in certain parts commandeered. You of course realize the seriousness of the affair. A word from you will go far.

2.

ONZE RUST,
12*th October*, 1914.

DEAR GENERAL BOTHA,

I have received the telegram containing the serious news about Maritz and his commando. I need not tell you that I fully realize its serious character and also understand what the consequences of it may be for our people.

You say that a word from me can do much. It is just here that my difficulty comes in. Not that it is hard for me to reprobate treason or to condemn the action of Maritz and his followers. That deed is done, however, and whatever I might say or do, cannot be undone. Yet where I have to speak a word to the people I must deal with the people honourably and openly. I shall have to tell the people that I most strongly disapprove of the policy of the Government respecting an attack upon German West Africa. I shall also have to tell the people that I not only disapprove of that policy, but that as far back as three years ago I warned you against such a policy, and that on the outbreak of the European War I had again repeated that warning to General Smuts. I regret that my well-meant advice, which I regarded as in the interests of South Africa and the Empire, has not been followed. As a result of that policy a number of officers and men, who as far as I know were loyal, have become rebels. You will thus see that a letter written in that spirit will not have the desired effect, but, on the contrary, will do more harm than good, and yet I cannot

intervene in this affair without making my standpoint clear. I owe this to my people and to myself. I am not yet strong; I am already feeling the evil effects of the terrible times in which we are living, and therefore I had hoped to be able to remain outside the present conflict, quietly and wherever possible exerting my influence in the direction of moderating public feeling in its excited condition. Even now I still feel that this is the most effective course for me to pursue. My position is not easy. It is with difficulty that I can get about, and so I cannot go to the people. I cannot speak to them either, as even in ordinary conversation I sometimes find difficulty in speaking.

An open letter to the effect detailed above is undesirable. I understand your difficulty, and shall do nothing to render your task more difficult still.

I have written frankly, in order that you may understand my position and also realize my desire to remain outside the conflict at the present time.

I am sending Colin with this letter, so that he may deliver it to you personally and inform you fully as to my condition. If you have any information that you wish to communicate you may also do so through him.

It is my heartfelt prayer that in these dark days the needful strength and wisdom and, above all, prudence, may be vouchsafed you from on high.

With heartfelt greetings,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

(*Sgd.*) M. T. Steyn.

3.

13th October, 1914.

My dear President,

Colin delivered your letter yesterday evening. While thanking you for it and also the open manner in which you explain to me your point of view, I must say that I felt deeply disappointed at the contents. One expression in particular has hurt me extremely—namely, where you say that "as a consequence of that policy a number of officers and men, who as far as I know were loyal, have become rebels." In other words, President, you say that my colleagues and I are responsible for the scandalous action of Maritz. This is not the occasion to discuss in detail all the pros and cons of our policy—the careful consideration of these from all sides occupied the attention of Parliament for days upon end—the fact is, however, that the policy is not only the policy of the Government but that of an overwhelming majority of the representatives of the people. Personally, I have never yet felt the slightest doubt that this policy is in the real interests of our people, and that any other line of conduct would have entailed nothing but unhappy consequences for Africanderdom. So that if it is the policy of the Government that has been the cause of this crime of Maritz against his people, then it is at the same time the policy of the vast majority of Parliament, and also, without the slightest doubt, the policy which is not only supported but demanded by the vast majority of the population of the Union. But, President, there is no connection between the decision of Par-

liament and this act of treason. *I possess the proofs* that long before the resolve of the Government became known—*in fact long before that resolve was come to*—a plot was already on foot—a plot with which Maritz and others with him were closely associated. Although we were successful in scotching the nefarious schemes which were already being hatched even before we had come to our decision, still the present treason of Maritz and his fellows is the direct outcome of these machinations. The *proofs* are in our hands. Even if it had been our decision that occasioned the treason of Maritz, that would not prove our policy was wrong; but our decision was not the cause of this treason. The cause of this treason is nothing but the outbreak of the war with Germany and the deplorable and fatal idea of the present traitors that now that the British Empire finds itself in difficulties the time has come to recover our freedom by making common cause with the Germans across our borders.

It is an abominable thing that Maritz has done. A large number of unthinking young men who had been entrusted to his charge, who were in one of the annual training camps, and whom we should not even have employed in the attack upon German South-West Africa, have been prevailed upon by him to commit the crime of high treason. President, the misery and the sorrow that may come upon our people in consequence of this action are so awful that in my opinion it is the sacred duty of every man of influence in our country to do everything in his power to keep these consequences within as

narrow limits as possible. There is no one, President, who could speak a word with greater effect than you. It is not the Government that I am concerned for—I am not asking for anything to strengthen the position of the Government. I am only asking you to believe that the Government is inspired by the interests of our people, and that, however strongly you may disapprove of the policy of the Government, the Government at least is supremely convinced that the cause upon which we have entered is in the interests of our country and our people. If you believe this, I say, then I would address an earnest appeal to you who stand above political parties and interests—speak a word to warn our people against treason, against the everlasting stain that anything of the kind would be upon our national honour, and against the incalculably fatal consequences. At the same time, President, if you cannot speak that word otherwise than in the form you have indicated, it is better to say nothing, because that would not encourage our people to support the authorities loyally in this crisis, but rather the reverse.

Yours sincerely,

(*Sgd.*) Louis Botha.

To His Honour President M. T. Steyn,
Onze Rust, Kaalspruit, Orange Free State.

4.

22*nd October*, 1914.

Dear President Steyn,

I regret most deeply to have to inform you that the Government is in possession of information

which they can no longer question that preparations are being made for a general armed insurrection amongst our Boer population, and that General De Wet, Beyers, and Kemp, with others of our old officers, are actively employed at the head of this movement. I do not know if you have heard of this, and if you attach importance to the information in question; but I give you the assurance that the evidence is of such a character that I can no longer entertain a moment's doubt. You are, of course, aware, President, what the meaning of this is likely to be for our people. Perhaps in a few days we shall be face to face with a civil war in which the Government will be obliged to do their duty, in which the English population is unanimous as one man, and in which our Boer population will be sharply divided. Our people in the Cape Province are almost unanimously opposed to this treasonable movement, and in the old Republics as well it is certain that there is a large proportion of the people, to say the least, which feels that there is no advantage to be gained for ourselves or our posterity along the path of treason and disloyalty. The outcome, therefore, of such an insurrection, headed by men who in the past have been our honoured leaders, can only mean the total ruin of our people. For my part, I am prepared to take any honourable steps to obviate such a disaster, but I would appeal to you too, President, and I feel assured that in this our dark hour I shall not do so in vain. Our people still continue to look up to you as their greatest figure, and they will listen to you as they would to no one else amongst

them. The situation imposes upon you the responsibility of no longer remaining quiet, but using all your influence to avert this calamity. I consider it imperative that you should without delay, through your son Colin and other reliable men, despatch a letter to De Wet, Beyers, and Kemp, and either summon them to meet you or in some other way turn them from the path of destruction where they now stand. If they come to you, the Government will take no steps to arrest them and will provide every facility for your messengers.

Do your best, President, to save our people from this reproach, this indelible dishonour. The position is more serious than words can describe.

What you do must be done at once; an outbreak may now be expected every day.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully and sincerely,

(*Sgd.*) Louis Botha.

His Honour President M. T. Steyn,
Onze Rust, Orange Free State.

5.

Onze Rust,
23*rd October*, 1914.

Dear General Botha,

General Burger has handed me your letter.

And so the thing against which my prayers and labours and warnings have for the past ten years been directed—viz., civil war—has come at last. According to the information supplied me by General Burger I can no longer doubt that this is the case.

I am sending Colin with a view to averting, if

possible, at the last moment the danger feared. I shall therefore request Generals De Wet, Beyers, and Kemp to meet me here at Onze Rust. How far your information is correct as to the last I cannot judge. I accordingly assume that it is so. I question its accuracy as regards De Wet.

The success of my efforts will largely depend upon the manner in which this affair is handled by the Government. If Generals Beyers and Kemp have already committed an act of rebellion, you can understand that they will not be inclined to leave their burghers and run the risk of being arrested.

The most distinct assurance must, therefore, be given upon this point, also that if they abandon their resistance you will not have themselves and their followers arrested and brought to justice.

It will also be well to extend the above to include Maritz and his followers; for you will understand that if the allegation is correct that Generals Beyers and Kemp were in the plot with Maritz, they will not be inclined to leave him in the lurch in order to save themselves. In a matter of this kind, General, statesmanship is frequently of more effect than force of arms.

I cannot too strongly recommend this policy of forbearance, and that not only in the interests of our people, but also in your own. Once blood has been spilt the time for forbearance is past, and then, rightly or wrongly, you and your colleagues will have to bear the reproach that it was under your Government that civil war, if not fraternal war, broke out. Do, therefore, what you can, General, to prevent it.

I am doing everything in my power as far as my feeble strength allows. I am, as yet, not apprehensive as regards the Free State, but if the fire is once kindled in the Transvaal I am afraid that the Free State too will be ablaze in a moment. May God in His mercy avert it! Colin is at your service to proceed further immediately upon arrival in Pretoria. I do not know where General De Wet is. Please find out, for it will be necessary for Colin to see him, too, personally, and deliver my letter. Unfortunately the telephone service is stopped this morning, and so it is difficult to discover where he is. Please give instructions, if you can, for the telephone to be kept open for me.

Hoping that these efforts may meet with such blessing that our country may yet be saved from the danger apprehended and with kindest greeting and deepest respect,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

(*Sgd.*) M. T. Steyn.

P.S.—Keep this out of the papers. Publicity may possibly defeat our plans. I shall also acquaint Hertzog with the position.

APPENDIX C

CONTINUATION OF TELEGRAMS BETWEEN EX-PRESIDENT STEYN AND GENERAL SMUTS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE BETWEEN EX-PRESIDENT STEYN, DE WET, AND BEYERS

Steyn to General Smuts.

18*th November.*

Your telegram to hand. The contents thereof are very disappointing, but as the responsibility rests with the Government, it is not for me to judge its attitude. More especially is the matter disappointing to me, because, on a former occasion, after bloodshed had already taken place, the Government was yet able to find a peaceful solution. Allow me to remark that the facts as set forth by you do not clearly show the course of events. General Beyers told me that he would come if General De Wet came, but before General Hertzog and Colin could reach De Wet an attack was made on General Beyers by the Government, although I had requested that nothing should be done to render the negotiations more difficult.

This action against General Beyers has undoubtedly influenced De Wet in his attitude. As it was on General Botha's request that I intervened, his attack on General Beyers was a disappointment to me.

I am convinced that this attempt to restore peace was really meant, and was not merely intended to gain time. Your information *re* what General De Wet told his burghers about Hertzog and myself cannot be correct, because General De Wet would not tell an untruth. I am also surprised that you make a remark about my silence, since directly after the treachery of Maritz I communicated my attitude to General Botha and more especially as you let me know twice through Colin that you did not think it desirable that I should say anything at first.

Nobody could impart to my silence the meaning you indicate, as my efforts to bring about peace were generally known. To say anything now after matters have taken such a course would be more easily misconstrued than my silence. I tried honestly and sincerely to ward off disaster from our country. I have no power to act. I can only give advice, and this is not always accepted. For the present I shall remain quiet, but if I could be of any service to my people at a later date my services are at your disposal.

I am sending Brand Wessels to Generals De Wet and Beyers with a copy of your telegram, so that they may know contents, and, if they wish to do so, may open negotiations direct with the Government.

Please issue instructions at once so that Wessels may be allowed to do this.

General Smuts to His Honour President Steyn.

19th November.

I extremely regret that you should have viewed my reply in the way you did. It was by no means

my intention to make recriminations which under present circumstances would be out of place, but to make clear the reasons why your request for safe-conduct could not be acceded to. I did not understand either from the course of events or from Colin that General De Wet was influenced by the fighting which took place in Rustenburg and Lichtenburg. Your request that we should not take the offensive in the Free State was given effect to until it was virtually too late and the massing of large rebel commandos in the Free State had made civil war practically unavoidable. The collision between Cronje and General De Wet near Doornberg was of course on both sides a mere accident, but proves the impossibility of avoiding conflict when commandos are opposed to each other in the field. If you compare the date of General Botha's letter to you with that of General De Wet's final refusal to attend conference at Onze Rust, you will see with what patience we on our side have acted. And it will always be a matter for sharp criticism of the action of the Government that, whilst they were in a position to prevent it, they allowed General De Wet to take undisturbed possession of the whole of Northern Free State under the pretext of carrying on private negotiations. Our action was due simply and solely to our earnest desire to save the honour of our people and to avoid the calamity of a civil war. Where our efforts have so fatally miscarried it would be criminal indeed to incur the same risk, especially as we know nothing first-hand as to General De Wet's attitude, but are asked to

act only on hearsay, which does not tally with his own authentic public speeches at Vrede and elsewhere.

I am grieved to learn from your telegram that you seem to be under the impression that we were reproaching or accusing you. My sole object was to make it clear that the public is not in possession of the information we have, and that owing to your silence many are falling into error. It is true I told Colin that, under the present circumstances, more good could be done by personal discussion with General De Wet than by public statements, and that a statement could be left in abeyance until you had seen De Wet, but I also understood from Colin that if the conference failed you would probably seek other means of advising the people. And this was also to be expected as acts of rebellion were committed by prominent leaders of our Africander people under circumstances which made it the sacred duty of all other leaders to make their position perfectly clear not only privately, but also in respect of the whole nation.

I regret that no safe-conduct can be given to Brand Wessels, but if you wish it the Government will send a copy of my last telegram to Generals De Wet and Beyers for their information.

Steyn to General Smuts.

PRETORIA,
20th November.

Hearty thanks for your kind telegram. A blind fate seems to be steering all plans into confusion. The refusal of the Government to allow conference

shatters at one blow yet another plan to bring about peace. By the refusal to grant Brand Wessels safe-conduct a powerful influence for peace on General De Wet has been taken away. The policy of the Government *re* German South-West Africa at first sealed my lips. The present policy to administer inexorable punishment prevents my speaking, as I know that such policy will plunge us into even greater misery than we are now enduring. Though a leader no longer, yet at the same time I may not violate my conscience. It was not my intention to accuse the Government, and yourself least of all, of having acted hastily in the Free State, neither do I wish to excuse General De Wet's attitude. The time gained by him was, however, also made use of by the Government to concentrate large forces in his vicinity. No one appreciated your attitude more than I did. My request to refrain from anything which might have impeded negotiations did not apply to the Free State merely, but also to the Transvaal. The collision between De Wet and Cronje was on the part of Cronje no mere accident, for General Hattingh, coming as he did from General De Wet on his way to me, knew that De Wet was not aware of Cronje's presence at Doornberg. Hattingh sent a request to Cronje through the latter's Veldkornet Botha to withdraw or keep out of the way, and begged him to grant us two days longer to endeavour to bring about peace. This request was not granted, and the fight then took place. I would again request you to consider neither the above nor anything else I have written as a reproach or as

a criticism of your policy or actions. My object is merely to lay my heart bare to you and thus prevent my attitude from being misconstrued. I am merely doing what I consider to be my duty. Should I have a wrong conception of it I shall have to bear the blame. As regards the despatch of a telegram by you to De Wet and Beyers, I may say that I do not expect the result would be the same as when brought to De Wet by Brand Wessels, who was employed by me on a former occasion in connection with these negotiations, and whose influence with De Wet forms a favourable element in the direction of peace.

APPENDIX D

NOTES ON POINTS RAISED IN FOURIE'S SPEECH

Slachter's Nek Rebellion.—This occurred in the year 1815. About fifty farmers who lived near the Fish River rose in rebellion. It arose out of the fact that some Hottentot soldiers were sent to arrest a man named Frederik Bezuidenhout, who was charged with assaulting a servant. As he would not surrender, one of the soldiers shot him dead. His brother and some relatives then induced their neighbours to join in driving the Hottentot regiment away. A military force was sent against the insurgents, and a number of burghers (Dutchmen), who looked upon the revolt as an act of madness, joined in trying to suppress it. It was easily suppressed, and all who took part in it were made prisoners except the leader, Jan Bezuidenhout, who would not surrender, and stood at bay until he was shot dead. The prisoners were brought to trial, and five were hanged and others were banished from the frontier.

Bloed River, Natal.—There is no evidence to justify the allegation that the British were in any way responsible for the massacres of the Boers at the hands of the Zulus in 1838. The facts are that, after the massacre of Pieter Retief and his sixty-six white companions by Dingaan's warriors, the settlers

of Natal and the Boers determined to punish Dingaan. Two armies were formed, one composed of Natal natives, who were led by a few Englishmen then living at the little settlement of Durban. They marched to the River Tugela, and in a battle on its northern bank were defeated, when more than two-thirds of those composing it lost their lives. The other army, consisting of farmers under Hendrik Potgieter and Pieter Uys, were drawn into an ambush, but cut their way through with the loss of ten lives, among them being Pieter Uys and his fifteen-year-old son, Dikr.

Concentration Camps.—This is a matter arising out of the late Boer War. The Boer women and children were taken from their farms and placed in camps, where they were fed at the expense of the British Government, and the children were educated by teachers also paid by the British Government. There were many deaths, due to the aggregation of so many people in a comparatively confined space, to insanitary conditions, etc. But the authorities had a very difficult task, and in many instances their efforts were hardly seconded as they might have been by the unhappy people themselves. At any rate there was no wilful intention on the part of the British to ill-treat the occupants of the camps, and the allegation that they " murdered " the women and children is unfounded. It was the first time in the history of warfare that the attempt was made to mitigate its horrors by removing the women and children of the enemy from the theatre of active operations to a place of safety. It was rendered par-

ticularly necessary in South Africa owing to the presence of an enormous native population and to the fact that the women and children were in most cases left without male protection, their men-folk being on commando.

Sand River Convention.—An agreement arrived at on January 17, 1852, between two British representatives—Major Hogg and Mr. Owen—and the Transvaal emigrant farmers represented by Commandant Pretorius and a number of delegates of the Transvaal people. In this document the British Government guaranteed to the emigrants north of the River Vaal the right to manage their own affairs without interference. The convention was confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and was ratified by the Volksraad. On April 12, 1877, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, on behalf of the British Government, issued a proclamation declaring the country a British possession, his reasons for so doing being that it was the only way to save the country from anarchy owing to the hostile attitude of the Zulus, the trouble with Sekukuni in the Northern Transvaal, and the inherent weakness of the State, which was practically bankrupt. The British then entered the country in strong force, and administered it satisfactorily until 1881, when, after the defeat at Majuba Hill, the late Mr. W. E. Gladstone restored their independence, with Britain exercising suzerainty only with regard to external affairs. With the discovery of the great goldfields of the Witwatersrand and the influx of a huge British population, all sorts of difficulties began to arise, principally with regard

to the franchise and education, and on October 9, 1899, the Transvaal Government issued an ultimatum which was followed by the outbreak of war on the 11th. The struggle lasted until May 31, 1902, when the peace of Vereeniging was signed, and the two Republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State ceased to exist as such, and became British colonies.

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ADDENDUM

THE following are some of the principal sentences passed on the rebels by the Special Treason Courts:

	Imprisonment.	*Fine.*
De Wet - - - -	6 years.	£2,000.
Kemp - - - -	7 „	£1,000.
Captain B. P. Coetzee -	5 „	
Wessel Wessels - - -	5 „	£1,000.
Commandant F. G. A. Wolmarans - - -	4 „	
Serfontein - - - -	4 „	
Conray - - - -	4 „	
J. S. R. de Villiers - -	4 „	
A. S. Louw - - -	4 „	
Field-Cornet Van Rensberg	3 „	
P. J. Joubert - - -	3 „	
P. J. Bosman - - -	3 „	
P. J. Dreyer - - -	3 „	
Rev. H. D. van Broekhuisen	2 „	
H. Oost (Editor) - -	1 year.	

And there were many others whose sentences varied from two years down to one year.

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